I am a heritage because I bring you years of thought and the lore of time — I impart yet I can not speak — I have traveled among the peoples of the earth — I am a rover — Oft-times I stray from the fireside of the one who loves and cherishes me - who misses me when I am gone — Should you find me vagrant please send me home - among my brothers - on the book shelves of .....

ALFRED SANTELL

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THE WORKS OF
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
VAILIMA EDITION

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THE WORKS OF
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
VAILIMA EDITION
VOLUME V

THE MAP OF TREASURE ISLAND
REPRODUCED FROM THE ORIGINAL

TREASURE ISLAND
PRINCE OTTO

BY
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
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NOTE BY LLOYD OSBOURNE

YEARS ago when I was a little boy of twelve I was spending my holidays in Scotland with my mother and my step-father. He was an unknown and unsuccessful author named Robert Louis Stevenson, who wrote books that never passed beyond one small edition, and whose gay acquiescence in failure cost me many a childish pang. I knew that his books were very poor, for being a great reader I had toiled through every one of them. Indeed, they were so uninteresting that I even wondered he had as many as the seven hundred and fifty readers whom he said he could always count on. Feeling that he ought to do better, I often timidly remonstrated with him, pointing out that while he wrote beautifully, was not his fault perhaps in the choice of subjects? But his only answer was to burst out laughing and then to tell me with humorous impressiveness that there was certainly one thing he would never never be—and that was a popular author.

The thing that puzzled me was that he was as fond as I of Mayne Reid, Fenimore Cooper, Jules Verne, and Marryat; it was not as though he didn't

appreciate good books; and certainly none of the seven hundred and fifty readers of *An Inland Voyage* could possibly have recognised in him the Indian, or Frontiersman, or Explorer, or Naval Officer (with accompanying Midshipman) landing with Secret Despatches on a Hostile Coast—embellishments which served to give such delight to our walks together, and always brought me home in such a glow of romance. That idolised step-father of mine was the most inspiring playfellow in the world—which made it seem all the sadder that he was unable to write a book worth reading.

We lived in a small house that was known in the neighbourhood by the somewhat depressing name of "the late Miss McGregor's cottage;" and here, one rainy morning, busy with a box of paints, I happened to be tinting the map of an island I had drawn. Stevenson came in as I was finishing it, and with his affectionate interest in everything I was doing, leaned over my shoulder, and was soon elaborating the map, and naming it. I shall never forget the thrill of Skeleton Island, Spy Glass Hill, nor the heart-stirring climax of the three red crosses! And the great climax still when we wrote down the words "Treasure Island" at the top right-hand corner! And he seemed to know so much about it too—the pirates, the buried treasure, the man who had been marooned on the island. "Oh, for a story about it," I exclaimed, in a heaven of enchant-

ment, and somehow conscious of his own enthusiasm in the idea.

Then after writing in more names he put the map in his pocket, and I can recall the little feeling of disappointment I had at losing it. After all, it was my map, and had already become very precious owing to its association with pirates, and the fact that it had been found in an old sea chest which had been lost and forgotten for years and years. But my step-father took it away, and the next day at noon I was called up mysteriously to his bedroom (he always spent the mornings writing in bed), and the first thing I saw was my beloved map lying on the coverlet. Still wondering why I had been summoned so specially, and not a little proud and expectant, I was told to sit down while my step-father took up some sheets of manuscript, and began to read aloud the first chapter of *Treasure Island.*

Thus one of the greatest, the most universal of all romances came to be written, and that I should have had a share in its inception has always been to me a source of inexpressible pleasure. Had it not been for me, and my childish box of paints, there would have been no such book as *Treasure Island.*

LLOYD OSBOURNE.

PREFATORY NOTE

IT was a season of rain and chill weather that we spent in the cottage of the late Miss McGregor, though the townspeople called the cold, steady, penetrating drizzle "just misting." In Scotland a fair day appears to mean fairly wet. "It is quite fair, now," they will say, when you can hardly distinguish the houses across the street. Queen Victoria, who had endeared herself greatly to the folk of the neighbourhood, showed a true Scottish spirit in her indifference to the weather. Her Majesty was in the habit of driving out to take tea in the open, accompanied by a couple of ladies-in-waiting. The road from Balmoral ran not far behind the late Miss McGregor's cottage; and as the queen always drove in an open carriage, with her tea-basket strapped on behind, we could see her pass very plainly. Our admiration for the sturdy old lady was very much tempered by our sympathy with the ladies-in-waiting, with whom driving backward on the front seat did not, apparently, agree. Their poor noses were very red, and the expression of their faces anxious, not to say cross, as they miserably coughed and sneezed.

Our first visitors were Mr. Sidney Colvin and Mr. Edmund Gosse. We could hardly expect men like these to take an abiding interest in the pastimes of even their own queen, and we had no other outside attraction to offer. However, there was one amusement that the family, at least, enjoyed keenly, in which we could ask them to join. As has been told elsewhere, at the eager pleading of my twelve-year-old son, Lloyd Osbourne, a story then called *The Sea Cook* was being written for his especial benefit, a chapter each day to be read in the otherwise dull afternoon. Though this tale, begun without any fixed plan, was intended to make the enforced seclusion of the child less irksome, there was one other in the audience whose interest was as intense, and whose suggestions and criticisms were always purposeful and valuable. My husband's voice was extraordinarily thrilling and sympathetic, with a fine dramatic quality. I have never heard anything quite like it, even on the stage. I remember, in a room full of people, some one speaking in a disparaging manner of Walt Whitman. With no comment my husband reached up to a shelf, took down *Leaves of Grass*, and began reading *A Stranger from Alabama*. By the time he had come to the line, "I almost think I can see her," the entire company were streaming tears, and the scoffer was silenced by his own emotion. My father-in-law would sit entranced during our daily

chapter, his noble head bent forward, his great, glowing eyes fixed on his son's face. Every incident of the story could be read in his changing countenance. At any slip in style, or taste, or judgment he would perceptibly wince. I shall always believe that something unusual and great was lost to the world in Thomas Stevenson. One could almost see the struggle between the creature of cramped hereditary conventions and environment, and the man nature had intended him to be. Fortunately for my husband he inherited from this tragic father his genius and wide humanity alone. The natural gaiety of Margaret Stevenson, who lived as a bird sings, for very joy of it, she passed down to her son, who needed it all—and had it all—to carry him safely through the monotony of suffering that he endured for so many years with such unfailing cheerfulness.

Treasure Island, which, before the advent of our visitors, had been thought of simply as an amusement for a small boy condemned to the inaction of an indoor life by the inclement weather, now, under the stimulus of the admiration of men like Mr. Colvin and Mr. Gosse, began to be regarded seriously as a possible novel; and the arrangement for its serial publication by Doctor Japp filled its author with fresh enthusiasm not unmixed with apprehension.

Fifteen chapters were finished and read in Brae-

mar, and several in Weybridge, when autumn came upon us unawares, and it was time to make our flitting to Davos. We carried the unfinished novel with us on the journey, as we rather expected to stop and rest *en route*, and my husband thought he might feel inclined to add a chapter or two on the way. But, alas, we carried something else: a toy theatre for the lad, who had preceded us with his tutor; also sheets of unpainted sets, *penny plain*, and a fine, large box of water-colours, that Lloyd might have the joy of painting his own scenes. The first night we stopped we opened the package of manuscript, which also contained the theatre sets and the paints. I began idly trying the colours on one of the *plains*. My enthusiasm rose with action, and I was soon absorbed in the sport. My husband watched me for a moment, and then he too, fell a victim. We painted on and on, until the night was almost spent, only ceasing with the end of our material, and *Treasure Island* went back into the parcel as it came out.

At Davos the work was again taken up, but intermittently. Had it not been appearing as a serial, I doubt if it would ever have been finished. Writing for serial publication in haste is a somewhat precarious occupation. I remember, when we once stopped for a day or two at Lyons, my husband's dismay when he sat down to write a chapter of *The Black Arrow* to find that he had forgotten how to

extricate his hero from an apparently impossible position. He could only make a new, somewhat lame invention to take the place of what was originally meant to be a most thrilling and ingenious escape.

If play promised more pleasure than work there was no weak hesitation in my husband's choice. He chose play with the ardour of a boy, and while he played there was no other thought in his mind but the game. We had taken, for this second winter in Davos, a cottage called the Châlet am Stein. The lower floor contained a large room, unused because it possessed no facilities for heating. On the bare floor an immense map was drawn in chalk; here the man and the boy spent many hours at a sort of *Kriegspiel* beyond my capacity to understand. They would come up-stairs when their fingers became too cold to make their shots, blue-lipped and shivering, their eyes shining, and their faces fairly illuminated with excitement.

When this was denied him by his doctors, my husband found another form of entertainment. With some blocks of wood and a small chisel obtained from the local carpenter he made rude wood-engravings, wrote verses under them, and called them "moral emblems." I afterwards got him some pear-wood blocks and proper engraving tools; but with the elimination of difficulties his interest waned. Thus, between intervals of play and other work, and occasional attacks of illness, the last

pages of the novel were finished and sent off to the publishers from the Châlet am Stein.

Until the unexpected popular success of *Treasure Island*, my husband had hoped or looked for nothing more to follow from his work than a modest livelihood, and perhaps a *succès d'estime*. The latter he was almost assured of by the criticisms of such men as Philip Gilbert Hamerton, Sidney Colvin, and Edmund Gosse. Much has been said concerning the labour he found necessary in order to maintain the high level of his style, the "sedulous ape" being quoted as evidence. He worked hard and continuously at the beginning of his career when he was trying all paths in search of the road that was the right and only road for him; but having found it there was no more need for the sedulous ape. It is also true that he sometimes wrote and rewrote after he had "found himself," but more often his work came with great facility, needing almost no correction. It is curious how an unusual word or phrase may be caught up and exploited until it is threadbare. The sedulous ape is such an instance. An expression in *Treasure Island*, "his eye gleaming like a crumb of glass," which has been often quoted with approbation, always made my husband wince when he read it. "A crumb," he would repeat with scorn; "why a *crumb* of glass? better a piece—a bit, anything of glass but a crumb!"

F. V. DE G. S.

MY FIRST BOOK

"TREASURE ISLAND"

IT was far, indeed, from being my first book, for I am not a novelist alone. But I am well aware that my paymaster, the great public, regards what else I have written with indifference, if not aversion. If it call upon me at all, it calls on me in the familiar and indelible character; and when I am asked to talk of my first book, no question in the world but what is meant is my first novel.

Sooner or later, somehow, anyhow, I was bound I was to write a novel. It seems vain to ask why. Men are born with various manias: from my earliest childhood it was mine to make a plaything of imaginary series of events; and as soon as I was able to write, I became a good friend to the paper-makers. Reams upon reams must have gone to the making of *Rathillet*, the *Pentland Rising*,[1] the *King's Pardon* (other-

[1] *Ne pas confondre.* Not the slim green pamphlet with the imprint of Andrew Elliott, for which (as I see with amazement from the book-lists) the gentlemen of England are willing to pay fancy prices; but its predecessor, a bulky historical romance without a spark of merit, and now deleted from the world.

wise *Park Whitehead*), *Edward Darren*, *A Country Dance*, and a *Vendetta in the West;* and it is consolatory to remember that these reams are now all ashes, and have been received again into the soil. I have named but a few of my ill-fated efforts: only such, indeed, as came to a fair bulk ere they were desisted from; and even so they cover a long vista of years. *Rathillet* was attempted before fifteen, the *Vendetta* at twenty-nine, and the succession of defeats lasted unbroken till I was thirty-one. By that time I had written little books and little essays and short stories, and had got patted on the back and paid for them—though not enough to live upon. I had quite a reputation. I was the successful man. I passed my days in toil, the futility of which would sometimes make my cheek to burn,—that I should spend a man's energy upon this business, and yet could not earn a livelihood; and still there shone ahead of me an unattained ideal. Although I had attempted the thing with vigour not less than ten or twelve times, I had not yet written a novel. All—all my pretty ones—had gone for a little, and then stopped inexorably, like a schoolboy's watch. I might be compared to a cricketer of many years' standing who should never have made a run. Anybody can write a short story—a bad one, I mean—who has industry and paper and time enough; but not every one may hope to write even a bad novel. It is the length

that kills. The accepted novelist may take his novel up and put it down, spend days upon it in vain, and write not any more than he makes haste to blot. Not so the beginner. Human nature has certain rights; instinct—the instinct of self-preservation—forbids that any man (cheered and supported by the consciousness of no previous victory) should endure the miseries of unsuccessful literary toil beyond a period to be measured in weeks. There must be something for hope to feed upon. The beginner must have a slant of wind, a lucky vein must be running, he must be in one of those hours when the words come and the phrases balance of themselves—*even to begin.* And having begun, what a dread looking forward is that until the book shall be accomplished! For so long a time the slant is to continue unchanged, the vein to keep running; for so long a time you must hold at command the same quality of style; for so long a time your puppets are to be always vital, always consistent, always vigorous. I remember I used to look, in those days, upon every three-volume novel with a sort of veneration, as a feat—not possibly of literature—but at least of physical and moral endurance and the courage of Ajax.

In the fated year I came to live with my father and mother at Kinnaird, above Pitlochry. There I walked on the red moors and by the side of the golden burn. The rude, pure air of our

mountains inspirited, if it did not inspire us; and my wife and I projected a joint volume of bogie stories, for which she wrote *The Shadow on the Bed*, and I turned out *Thrawn Janet*, and a first draft of the *Merry Men*. I love my native air, but it does not love me; and the end of this delightful period was a cold, a fly blister, and a migration, by Strathairdle and Glenshee, to the Castleton of Braemar. There it blew a good deal and rained in a proportion. My native air was more unkind than man's ingratitude; and I must consent to pass a good deal of my time between four walls in a house lugubriously known as "the late Miss McGregor's cottage." And now admire the finger of predestination. There was a school-boy in the late Miss McGregor's cottage, home for the holidays, and much in want of "something craggy to break his mind upon." He had no thought of literature; it was the art of Raphael that received his fleeting suffrages, and with the aid of pen and ink and a shilling box of water-colours, he had soon turned one of the rooms into a picture-gallery. My more immediate duty towards the gallery was to be showman; but I would sometimes unbend a little, join the artist (so to speak) at the easel, and pass the afternoon with him in a generous emulation, making coloured drawings. On one of these occasions I made the map of an island; it was elaborately and (I thought) beautifully coloured;

the shape of it took my fancy beyond expression; it contained harbours that pleased me like sonnets; and with the unconsciousness of the predestined, I ticketed my performance *Treasure Island*. I am told there are people who do not care for maps, and find it hard to believe. The names, the shapes of the woodlands, the courses of the roads and rivers, the prehistoric footsteps of man still distinctly traceable up hill and down dale, the mills and the ruins, the ponds and the ferries, perhaps the *Standing Stone* or the *Druidic Circle* on the heath; here is an inexhaustible fund of interest for any man with eyes to see, or twopence worth of imagination to understand with. No child but must remember laying his head in the grass, staring into the infinitesimal forest, and seeing it grow populous with fairy armies. Somewhat in this way, as I pored upon my map of *Treasure Island*, the future characters of the book began to appear there visibly among imaginary woods; and their brown faces and bright weapons peeped out upon me from unexpected quarters, as they passed to and fro, fighting, and hunting treasure, on these few square inches of a flat projection. The next thing I knew, I had some paper before me and was writing out a list of chapters. How often have I done so, and the thing gone no farther! But there seemed elements of success about this enterprise. It was to be a story for boys; no need of psychology or fine writing;

and I had a boy at hand to be a touchstone. Women were excluded. I was unable to handle a brig (which the *Hispaniola* should have been), but I thought I could make shift to sail her as a schooner without public shame. And then I had an idea for John Silver from which I promised myself funds of entertainment: to take an admired friend of mine (whom the reader very likely knows and admires as much as I do), to deprive him of all his finer qualities and higher graces of temperament, to leave him with nothing but his strength, his courage, his quickness, and his magnificent geniality, and to try to express these in terms of the culture of a raw tarpaulin. Such psychical surgery is, I think, a common way of "making character"; perhaps it is, indeed, the only way. We can put in the quaint figure that spoke a hundred words with us yesterday by the wayside; but do we know him? Our friend, with his infinite variety and flexibility, we know—but can we put him in? Upon the first we must engraft secondary and imaginary qualities, possibly all wrong; from the second, knife in hand, we must cut away and deduct the needless arborescence of his nature; but the trunk and the few branches that remain we may at least be fairly sure of.

On a chill September morning, by the cheek of a brisk fire, and the rain drumming on the window, I began *The Sea Cook*, for that was the original title. I have begun (and finished)

a number of other books, but I cannot remember to have sat down to one of them with more complacency. It is not to be wondered at, for stolen waters are proverbially sweet. I am now upon a painful chapter. No doubt the parrot once belonged to Robinson Crusoe. No doubt the skeleton is conveyed from Poe. I think little of these, they are trifles and details; and no man can hope to have a monopoly of skeletons or make a corner in talking birds. The stockade, I am told, is from *Masterman Ready*. It may be, I care not a jot. These useful writers had fulfilled the poet's saying: departing, they had left behind them

> "Footprints on the sands of time;
> Footprints that perhaps another—— "

and I was the other! It is my debt to Washington Irving that exercises my conscience, and justly so, for I believe plagiarism was rarely carried farther. I chanced to pick up the *Tales of a Traveller* some years ago, with a view to an anthology of prose narrative, and the book flew up and struck me: Billy Bones, his chest, the company in the parlour, the whole inner spirit and a good deal of the material detail of my first chapters—all were there, all were the property of Washington Irving. But I had no guess of it then as I sat writing by the fireside, in what seemed the springtides of a somewhat pedestrian inspiration; nor yet day

by day, after lunch, as I read aloud my morning's work to the family. It seemed to me original as sin; it seemed to belong to me like my right eye. I had counted on one boy; I found I had two in my audience. My father caught fire at once with all the romance and childishness of his original nature. His own stories, that every night of his life he put himself to sleep with, dealt perpetually with ships, roadside inns, robbers, old sailors, and commercial travellers before the era of steam. He never finished one of these romances: the lucky man did not require to! But in *Treasure Island* he recognised something kindred to his own imagination; it was *his* kind of picturesque; and he not only heard with delight the daily chapter, but set himself actively to collaborate. When the time came for Billy Bones's chest to be ransacked, he must have passed the better part of a day preparing, on the back of a legal envelope, an inventory of its contents, which I exactly followed; and the name of "Flint's old ship," the *Walrus*, was given at his particular request. And now, who should come dropping in, *ex machina*, but Doctor Japp, like the disguised prince who is to bring down the curtain upon peace and happiness in the last act, for he carried in his pocket not a horn or a talisman, but a publisher; had, in fact, been charged by my old friend, Mr. Henderson, to unearth new writers for *Young Folks*. Even the ruthlessness of a

united family recoiled before the extreme measure of inflicting on our guest the mutilated members of *The Sea Cook;* at the same time we would by no means stop our readings, and accordingly the tale was begun again at the beginning, and solemnly redelivered for the benefit of Doctor Japp. From that moment on I have thought highly of his critical faculty; for when he left us, he carried away the manuscript in his portmanteau.

Here, then, was everything to keep me up—sympathy, help, and now a positive engagement. I had chosen besides a very easy style. Compare it with the almost contemporary *Merry Men;* one may prefer the one style, one the other —'tis an affair of character, perhaps of mood; but no expert can fail to see that the one is much more difficult, and the other much easier, to maintain. It seems as though a full-grown, experienced man of letters might engage to turn out *Treasure Island* at so many pages a day, and keep his pipe alight. But alas! this was not my case. Fifteen days I stuck to it, and turned out fifteen chapters; and then, in the early paragraphs of the sixteenth, ignominiously lost hold. My mouth was empty; there was not one word more of *Treasure Island* in my bosom; and here were the proofs of the beginning already waiting me at the *Hand and Spear!* There I corrected them, living for the most part alone, walking on the heath at Wey-

bridge in dewy autumn mornings, a good deal pleased with what I had done, and more appalled than I can depict to you in words at what remained for me to do. I was thirty-one; I was the head of a family; I had lost my health; I had never yet paid my way, had never yet made two hundred pounds a year; my father had quite recently bought back and cancelled a book that was judged a failure; was this to be another and last fiasco? I was indeed very close on despair; but I shut my mouth hard, and during the journey to Davos, where I was to pass the winter, had the resolution to think of other things, and bury myself in the novels of M. du Boisgobey. Arrived at my destination, down I sat one morning to the unfinished tale, and behold! it flowed from me like small talk; and in a second tide of delighted industry, and again at the rate of a chapter a day, I finished *Treasure Island.* It had to be transacted almost secretly. My wife was ill, the schoolboy remained alone of the faithful, and John Addington Symonds (to whom I timidly mentioned what I was engaged on) looked on me askance. He was at that time very eager I should write on the *Characters* of Theophrastus, so far out may be the judgments of the wisest men. But Symonds (to be sure) was scarce the confidant to go to for sympathy in a boy's story. He was large-minded; "a full man," if there ever was one; but the very name of my

enterprise would suggest to him only capitulations of sincerity and solecisms of style. Well, he was not far wrong.

Treasure Island—it was Mr. Henderson who deleted the first title, *The Sea Cook*—appeared duly in the story paper, where it figured in the ignoble midst without woodcuts and attracted not the least attention. I did not care. I like the tale myself, for much the same reason as my father liked the beginning: it was my kind of picturesque. I was not a little proud of John Silver also, and to this day rather admire that smooth and formidable adventurer. What was infinitely more exhilarating, I had passed a landmark; I had finished a tale, and written "The End" upon my manuscript, as I had not done since the *Pentland Rising*, when I was a boy of sixteen, not yet at college. In truth it was so by a set of lucky accidents: had not Doctor Japp come on his visit, had not the tale flowed from me with singular ease, it must have been laid aside like its predecessors, and found a circuitous and unlamented way to the fire. Purists may suggest it would have been better so. I am not of that mind. The tale seems to have given much pleasure, and it brought (or was the means of bringing) fire and food and wine to a deserving family in which I took an interest. I need scarce say I mean my own.

But the adventures of *Treasure Island* are not yet quite at an end. I had written it up to

the map. The map was the chief part of my plot. For instance, I had called an islet *Skeleton Island*, not knowing what I meant, seeking only for the immediate picturesque; and it was to justify this name that I broke into the gallery of Mr. Poe and stole Flint's pointer. And in the same way, it was because I had made two harbours that the *Hispaniola* was sent on her wanderings with Israel Hands. The time came when it was decided to republish, and I sent in my manuscript and the map along with it to Messrs. Cassell. The proofs came, they were corrected, but I heard nothing of the map. I wrote and asked; was told it had never been received, and sat aghast. It is one thing to draw a map at random, set a scale in one corner of it at a venture, and write up a story to the measurements. It is quite another to have to examine a whole book, make an inventory of all the allusions contained in it, and with a pair of compasses painfully design a map to suit the data. I did it, and the map was drawn again in my father's office, with embellishments of blowing whales and sailing ships; and my father himself brought into service a knack he had of various writing, and elaborately *forged* the signature of Captain Flint and the sailing directions of Billy Bones. But somehow it was never *Treasure Island* to me.

I have said it was the most of the plot. I might almost say it was the whole. A few

reminiscences of Poe, Defoe, and Washington Irving, a copy of Johnson's *Buccaneers*, the name of the Dead Man's Chest from Kingsley's *At Last*, some recollections of canoeing on the high seas, a cruise in a fifteen-ton schooner yacht, and the map itself with its infinite, eloquent suggestion, made up the whole of my materials. It is perhaps not often that a map figures so largely in a tale; yet it is always important. The author must know his countryside, whether real or imaginary, like his hand; the distances, the points of the compass, the place of the sun's rising, the behaviour of the moon, should all be beyond cavil. And how troublesome the moon is! I have come to grief over the moon in *Prince Otto;* and, so soon as that was pointed out to me, adopted a precaution which I recommend to other men—I never write now without an almanac. With an almanac, and the map of the country and the plan of every house, either actually plotted on paper or clearly and immediately apprehended in the mind, a man may hope to avoid some of the grossest possible blunders. With the map before him, he will scarce allow the sun to set in the east, as it does in the *Antiquary*. With the almanac at hand, he will scarce allow two horsemen, journeying on the most urgent affair, to employ six days, from three of the Monday morning till late in the Saturday night, upon a journey of, say, ninety or a hundred

miles; and before the week is out, and still on the same nags, to cover fifty in one day, as he may read at length in the inimitable novel of *Rob Roy*. And it is certainly well, though far from necessary, to avoid such *croppers*. But it is my contention—my superstition, if you like—that he who is faithful to his map, and consults it, and draws from it his inspiration, daily and hourly, gains positive support, and not mere negative immunity from accident. The tale has a root there; it grows in that soil; it has a spine of its own behind the words. Better if the country be real, and he has walked every foot of it and knows every milestone. But, even with imaginary places, he will do well in the beginning to provide a map. As he studies it, relations will appear that he had not thought upon. He will discover obvious though unsuspected short cuts and footpaths for his messengers; and even when a map is not all the plot, as it was in *Treasure Island*, it will be found to be a mine of suggestion.

TREASURE ISLAND

To the Hesitating Purchaser

If sailor tales to sailor tunes,
Storm and adventure, heat and cold,
If schooners, islands, and maroons,
And Buccaneers and buried Gold,
And all the old romance, retold
Exactly in the ancient way,
Can please, as me they pleased of old,
The wiser youngsters of to-day:

So be it, and fall on! If not,
If studious youth no longer crave,
His ancient appetites forgot,
Kingston, or Ballantyne the brave,
Or Cooper of the wood and wave:
So be it, also! And may I
And all my pirates share the grave
Where these and their creations lie!

TO

LLOYD OSBOURNE

An American Gentleman,

In accordance with whose classic taste
the following narrative has been designed,
it is now,
in return for numerous delightful hours
and with the kindest wishes,
Dedicated
by his affectionate friend,

THE AUTHOR

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PART I

THE OLD BUCCANEER

Facsimile letter
Dated August, 1883

La Solitude
Hyères-les-Palmiers
Var

Royat.
Saturday
August 1883.

My dear father, On receipt of a very cheering double letter from mysmother and you, I yesterday telegraphed to same time. It was as well I did so as, from a multiplicity of affairs and misadventures, I have never been able to sit down to write till now.

I have had and corrected all Treasure Island in sheets: it looks better so. I think the chart should be got under way. If it is not already done add a few more soundings about at the mouth of Capt Kidd's anchorage and round the south eastern corner of the Island.

Facsimile letter
Dated August, 1883

CHAPTER I

THE OLD SEA-DOG AT THE "ADMIRAL BENBOW"

SQUIRE TRELAWNEY, Dr. Livesey, and the rest of these gentlemen having asked me to write down the whole particulars about Treasure Island, from the beginning to the end, keeping nothing back but the bearings of the island, and that only because there is still treasure not yet lifted, I take up my pen in the year of grace 17—, and go back to the time when my father kept the "Admiral Benbow" inn, and the brown old seaman, with the sabre-cut, first took up his lodging under our roof.

I remember him as if it were yesterday, as he came plodding to the inn-door, his sea-chest following behind him in a hand-barrow; a tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man; his tarry pig-tail falling over the shoulders of his soiled blue coat; his hands ragged and scarred, with black, broken nails; and the sabre-cut across one cheek, a dirty, livid white. I remember him looking

round the cove and whistling to himself as he did so, and then breaking out in that old sea-song that he sang so often afterwards:—

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

in the high, old tottering voice that seemed to have been tuned and broken at the capstan bars. Then he rapped on the door with a bit of stick like a handspike that he carried, and when my father appeared, called roughly for a glass of rum. This, when it was brought to him, he drank slowly, like a connoisseur, lingering on the taste, and still looking about him at the cliffs and up at our sign-board.

"This is a handy cove," says he, at length; "and a pleasant sittyated grog-shop. Much company, mate?"

My father told him no, very little company, the more was the pity.

"Well, then," said he, "this is the berth for me.—Here you, matey," he cried to the man who trundled the barrow; "bring up alongside and help up my chest. I'll stay here a bit," he continued. "I'm a plain man; rum and bacon and eggs is what I want, and that head up there for to watch ships off.—What you mought call me? You mought call me captain. Oh, I see what you're at—there;" and he threw down three or four gold pieces on the threshold. "You can tell me when I've worked through

that," says he, looking as fierce as a commander.

And, indeed, bad as his clothes were, and coarsely as he spoke, he had none of the appearance of a man who sailed before the mast; but seemed like a mate or skipper, accustomed to be obeyed or to strike. The man who came with the barrow told us the mail had set him down the morning before at the "Royal George;" that he had inquired what inns there were along the coast, and hearing ours well spoken of, I suppose, and described as lonely, had chosen it from the others for his place of residence. And that was all we could learn of our guest.

He was a very silent man by custom. All day he hung round the cove, or upon the cliffs, with a brass telescope; all evening he sat in a corner of the parlour next the fire, and drank rum and water very strong. Mostly he would not speak when spoken to; only look up sudden and fierce, and blow through his nose like a fog-horn; and we and the people who came about our house soon learned to let him be. Every day, when he came back from his stroll, he would ask if any seafaring men had gone by along the road? At first we thought it was the want of company of his own kind that made him ask this question; but at last we began to see he was desirous to avoid them. When a seaman put up at the "Admiral Benbow" (as now and then some did, making by the coast road for

Bristol), he would look in at him through the curtained door before he entered the parlour; and he was always sure to be as silent as a mouse when any such was present. For me, at least, there was no secret about the matter; for I was, in a way, a sharer in his alarms. He had taken me aside one day, and promised me a silver fourpenny on the first of every month if I would only keep my "weather-eye open for a seafaring man with one leg," and let him know the moment he appeared. Often enough, when the first of the month came round, and I applied to him for my wage, he would only blow through his nose at me, and stare me down; but before the week was out he was sure to think better of it, bring me my fourpenny piece, and repeat his orders to look out for "the seafaring man with one leg."

How that personage haunted my dreams, I need scarcely tell you. On stormy nights, when the wind shook the four corners of the house, and the surf roared along the cove and up the cliffs, I would see him in a thousand forms, and with a thousand diabolical expressions. Now the leg would be cut off at the knee, now at the hip; now he was a monstrous kind of a creature who had never had but the one leg, and that in the middle of his body. To see him leap and run and pursue me over hedge and ditch was the worst of nightmares. And altogether I paid pretty dear for my monthly fourpenny piece, in the shape of these abominable fancies.

But though I was so terrified by the idea of the seafaring man with one leg, I was far less afraid of the captain himself than anybody else who knew him. There were nights when he took a deal more rum and water than his head would carry; and then he would sometimes sit and sing his wicked, old, wild sea-songs, minding nobody; but sometimes he would call for glasses round, and force all the trembling company to listen to his stories or bear a chorus to his singing. Often I have heard the house shaking with "Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum;" all the neighbours joining in for dear life, with the fear of death upon them, and each singing louder than the other, to avoid remark. For in these fits he was the most over-riding companion ever known; he would slap his hand on the table for silence all round; he would fly up in a passion of anger at a question, or sometimes because none was put, and so he judged the company was not following his story. Nor would he allow any one to leave the inn till he had drunk himself sleepy and reeled off to bed.

His stories were what frightened people worst of all. Dreadful stories they were; about hanging, and walking the plank, and storms at sea, and the Dry Tortugas, and wild deeds and places on the Spanish Main. By his own account he must have lived his life among some of the wickedest men that God ever allowed upon the sea; and the language in which he told these

stories shocked our plain country people almost as much as the crimes that he described. My father was always saying the inn would be ruined, for people would soon cease coming there to be tyrannised over and put down, and sent shivering to their beds; but I really believe his presence did us good. People were frightened at the time, but on looking back they rather liked it; it was a fine excitement in a quiet country life; and there was even a party of the younger men who pretended to admire him, calling him a "true sea-dog," and a "real old salt," and such like names, and saying there was the sort of man that made England terrible at sea.

In one way, indeed, he bade fair to ruin us; for he kept on staying week after week, and at last month after month, so that all the money had been long exhausted, and still my father never plucked up the heart to insist on having more. If ever he mentioned it, the captain blew through his nose so loudly, that you might say he roared, and stared my poor father out of the room. I have seen him wringing his hands after such a rebuff, and I am sure the annoyance and the terror he lived in must have greatly hastened his early and unhappy death.

All the time he lived with us the captain made no change whatever in his dress but to buy some stockings from a hawker. One of the cocks

of his hat having fallen down, he let it hang from that day forth, though it was a great annoyance when it blew. I remember the appearance of his coat, which he patched himself up-stairs in his room, and which, before the end, was nothing but patches. He never wrote or received a letter, and he never spoke with any but the neighbours, and with these, for the most part, only when drunk on rum. The great sea chest none of us had ever seen open.

He was only once crossed, and that was towards the end, when my poor father was far gone in a decline that took him off. Dr. Livesey came late one afternoon to see the patient, took a bit of dinner from my mother, and went into the parlour to smoke a pipe until his horse should come down from the hamlet, for we had no stabling at the old "Benbow." I followed him in, and I remember observing the contrast the neat, bright doctor, with his powder as white as snow, and his bright, black eyes and pleasant manners, made with the coltish country folk, and above all, with that filthy, heavy, bleared scarecrow of a pirate of ours, sitting far gone in rum, with his arms on the table. Suddenly he—the captain, that is—began to pipe up his eternal song:—

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil had done for the rest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

At first I had supposed "the dead man's chest" to be that identical big box of his up-stairs in the front room, and the thought had been mingled in my nightmares with that of the one-legged seafaring man. But by this time we had all long ceased to pay any particular notice to the song; it was new, that night, to nobody but Dr. Livesey, and on him I observed it did not produce an agreeable effect, for he looked up for a moment quite angrily before he went on with his talk to old Taylor, the gardener, on a new cure for the rheumatics. In the meantime, the captain gradually brightened up at his own music, and at last flapped his hand upon the table before him in a way we all knew to mean—silence. The voices stopped at once, all but Dr. Livesey's; he went on as before, speaking clear and kind, and drawing briskly at his pipe between every word or two. The captain glared at him for a while, flapped his hand again, glared still harder, and at last broke out with a villainous, low oath: "Silence, there, between decks!"

"Were you addressing me, sir?" says the doctor; and when the ruffian had told him, with another oath, that this was so, "I have only one thing to say to you, sir," replies the doctor, "that if you keep on drinking rum, the world will soon be quit of a very dirty scoundrel!"

The old fellow's fury was awful. He sprang to his feet, drew and opened a sailor's clasp-

knife, and, balancing it open on the palm of his hand, threatened to pin the doctor to the wall.

The doctor never so much as moved. He spoke to him, as before, over his shoulder, and in the same tone of voice; rather high, so that all the room might hear, but perfectly calm and steady:—

"If you do not put that knife this instant in your pocket, I promise, upon my honour, you shall hang at the next assizes."

Then followed a battle of looks between them; but the captain soon knuckled under, put up his weapon, and resumed his seat, grumbling like a beaten dog.

"And now, sir," continued the doctor, "since I now know there's such a fellow in my district, you may count I'll have an eye upon you day and night. I'm not a doctor only; I'm a magistrate; and if I catch a breath of complaint against you, if it's only for a piece of incivility like to-night's, I'll take effectual means to have you hunted down and routed out of this. Let that suffice."

Soon after Dr. Livesey's horse came to the door, and he rode away; but the captain held his peace that evening, and for many evenings to come.

CHAPTER II

BLACK DOG APPEARS AND DISAPPEARS

IT was not very long after this that there occurred the first of the mysterious events that rid us at last of the captain, though not, as you will see, of his affairs. It was a bitter cold winter, with long, hard frosts and heavy gales; and it was plain from the first that my poor father was little likely to see the spring. He sank daily, and my mother and I had all the inn upon our hands; and were kept busy enough, without paying much regard to our unpleasant guest.

It was one January morning, very early—a pinching, frosty morning—the cove all grey with hoar-frost, the ripple lapping softly on the stones, the sun still low and only touching the hilltops and shining far to seaward. The captain had risen earlier than usual, and set out down the beach, his cutlass swinging under the broad skirts of the old blue coat, his brass telescope under his arm, his hat tilted back upon his head. I remember his breath hanging

like smoke in his wake as he strode off, and the last sound I heard of him, as he turned the big rock, was a loud snort of indignation, as though his mind was still running upon Dr. Livesey.

Well, mother was up-stairs with father; and I was laying the breakfast-table against the captain's return, when the parlour door opened, and a man stepped in on whom I had never set my eyes before. He was a pale, tallowy creature, wanting two fingers of the left hand; and, though he wore a cutlass, he did not look much like a fighter. I had always my eye open for seafaring men, with one leg or two, and I remember this one puzzled me. He was not sailorly, and yet he had a smack of the sea about him too.

I asked him what was for his service, and he said he would take rum; but as I was going out of the room to fetch it he sat down upon a table, and motioned me to draw near. I paused where I was with my napkin in my hand.

"Come here, sonny," says he. "Come nearer here."

I took a step nearer.

"Is this here table for my mate, Bill?" he asked, with a kind of leer.

I told him I did not know his mate Bill; and this was for a person who stayed in our house, whom we called the captain.

"Well," said he, "my mate Bill would be called the captain, as like as not. He has a cut on one cheek, and a mighty pleasant way

with him, particularly in drink, has my mate, Bill. We'll put it, for argument like, that your captain has a cut on one cheek—and we'll put it, if you like, that that cheek's the right one. Ah, well! I told you. Now, is my mate Bill in this here house?"

I told him he was out walking.

"Which way, sonny? Which way is he gone?"

And when I had pointed out the rock and told him how the captain was likely to return, and how soon, and answered a few other questions, "Ah," said he, "this'll be as good as drink to my mate Bill."

The expression of his face as he said these words was not at all pleasant, and I had my own reasons for thinking that the stranger was mistaken, even supposing he meant what he said. But it was no affair of mine, I thought; and, besides, it was difficult to know what to do. The stranger kept hanging about just inside the inn-door, peering round the corner like a cat waiting for a mouse. Once I stepped out myself into the road, but he immediately called me back, and, as I did not obey quick enough for his fancy, a most horrible change came over his tallowy face, and he ordered me in, with an oath that made me jump. As soon as I was back again he returned to his former manner, half-fawning, half-sneering, patted me on the shoulder, told me I was a good boy, and he had taken quite a fancy to me. "I have a

son of my own," said he, "as like you as two blocks, and he's all the pride of my 'art. But the great thing for boys is discipline, sonny—discipline. Now, if you had sailed along of Bill, you wouldn't have stood there to be spoke to twice—not you. That was never Bill's way, nor the way of sich as sailed with him. And here, sure enough, is my mate Bill, with a spy-glass under his arm, bless his old 'art, to be sure. You and me'll just go back into the parlour, sonny, and get behind the door, and we'll give Bill a little surprise—bless his 'art, I say again."

So saying, the stranger backed along with me into the parlour, and put me behind him in the corner, so that we were both hidden by the open door. I was very uneasy and alarmed, as you may fancy, and it rather added to my fears to observe that the stranger was certainly frightened himself. He cleared the hilt of his cutlass and loosened the blade in the sheath; and all the time we were waiting there he kept swallowing as if he felt what we used to call a lump in the throat.

At last in strode the captain, slammed the door behind him, without looking to the right or left, and marched straight across the room to where his breakfast awaited him.

"Bill," said the stranger, in a voice that I thought he had tried to make bold and big.

The captain spun round on his heel and fronted

us; all the brown had gone out of his face, and even his nose was blue; he had the look of a man who sees a ghost, or the evil one, or something worse if anything can be; and, upon my word, I felt sorry to see him, all in a moment, turn so old and sick.

"Come, Bill, you know me; you know an old shipmate, Bill, surely," said the stranger.

The captain made a sort of gasp.

"Black Dog!" said he.

"And who else?" returned the other, getting more at his ease. "Black Dog as ever was, come for to see his old shipmate Billy, at the 'Admiral Benbow' inn. Ah, Bill, Bill, we have seen a sight of times, us two, since I lost them two talons," holding up his mutilated hand.

"Now, look here," said the captain; "you've run me down; here I am; well, then, speak up: what is it?"

"That's you, Bill," returned Black Dog, "you're in the right of it, Billy. I'll have a glass of rum from this dear child here, as I've took such a liking to; and we'll sit down, if you please, and talk square, like old shipmates."

When I returned with the rum, they were already seated on either side of the captain's breakfast-table—Black Dog next to the door, and sitting sideways, so as to have one eye on his old shipmate, and one, as I thought, on his retreat.

He bade me go, and leave the door wide open.

"None of your keyholes for me, sonny," he said; and I left them together, and returned into the bar.

For a long time, though I certainly did my best to listen, I could hear nothing but a low gabbling; but at last the voices began to grow higher, and I could pick up a word or two, mostly oaths, from the captain.

"No, no, no, no; and an end of it!" he cried once. And again, "If it comes to swinging, swing all, say I."

Then all of a sudden there was a tremendous explosion of oaths and other noises—the chair and table went over in a lump, a clash of steel followed, and then a cry of pain, and the next instant I saw Black Dog in full flight, and the captain hotly pursuing, both with drawn cutlasses, and the former streaming blood from the left shoulder. Just at the door, the captain aimed at the fugitive one last tremendous cut, which would certainly have split him to the chine had it not been intercepted by our big sign-board of Admiral Benbow. You may see the notch on the lower side of the frame to this day.

That blow was the last of the battle. Once out upon the road, Black Dog, in spite of his wound, showed a wonderful clean pair of heels, and disappeared over the edge of the hill in half a minute. The captain, for his part, stood staring at the sign-board like a bewildered man.

Then he passed his hand over his eyes several times, and at last turned back into the house.

"Jim," says he, "rum;" and as he spoke, he reeled a little, and caught himself with one hand against the wall.

"Are you hurt?" cried I.

"Rum," he repeated. "I must get away from here. Rum! rum!"

I ran to fetch it; but I was quite unsteadied by all that had fallen out, and I broke one glass and fouled the tap, and while I was still getting in my own way, I heard a loud fall in the parlour, and, running in, beheld the captain lying full length upon the floor. At the same instant my mother, alarmed by the cries and fighting, came running down-stairs to help me. Between us we raised his head. He was breathing very loud and hard; but his eyes were closed, and his face a horrible colour.

"Dear, deary me," cried my mother, "what a disgrace upon the house! And your poor father sick!"

In the meantime, we had no idea what to do to help the captain, nor any other thought but that he had got his death-hurt in the scuffle with the stranger. I got the rum, to be sure, and tried to put it down his throat; but his teeth were tightly shut, and his jaws as strong as iron. It was a happy relief for us when the door opened and Dr. Livesey came in, on his visit to my father.

"Oh, doctor," we cried, "what shall we do? Where is he wounded?"

"Wounded? A fiddle-stick's end!" said the doctor. "No more wounded than you or I. The man has had a stroke, as I warned him. Now, Mrs. Hawkins, just you run up-stairs to your husband, and tell him, if possible, nothing about it. For my part, I must do my best to save this fellow's trebly worthless life; and Jim here will get me a basin."

When I got back with the basin, the doctor had already ripped up the captain's sleeve, and exposed his great sinewy arm. It was tattooed in several places. "Here's luck," "A fair wind," and "Billy Bones his fancy," were very neatly and clearly executed on the forearm, and up near the shoulder there was a sketch of a gallows and a man hanging from it—done, as I thought, with great spirit.

"Prophetic," said the doctor, touching this picture with his finger. "And now, Master Billy Bones, if that be your name, we'll have a look at the colour of your blood. Jim," he said, "are you afraid of blood?"

"No, sir," said I.

"Well, then," said he, "you hold the basin;" and with that he took his lancet and opened a vein.

A great deal of blood was taken before the captain opened his eyes and looked mistily about him. First he recognised the doctor with

an unmistakable frown; then his glance fell upon me, and he looked relieved. But suddenly his colour changed, and he tried to raise himself, crying:—

"Where's Black Dog?"

"There is no Black Dog here," said the doctor, "except what you have on your own back. You have been drinking rum; you have had a stroke, precisely as I told you; and I have just, very much against my own will, dragged you headforemost out of the grave. Now, Mr. Bones——"

"That's not my name," he interrupted.

"Much I care," returned the doctor. "It's the name of a buccaneer of my acquaintance; and I call you by it for the sake of shortness, and what I have to say to you is this: one glass of rum won't kill you, but if you take one you'll take another and another, and I stake my wig if you don't break off short, you'll die—do you understand that?—die, and go to your own place, like the man in the Bible. Come, now, make an effort. I'll help you to your bed for once."

Between us, with much trouble, we managed to hoist him up-stairs, and laid him on his bed, where his head fell back on the pillow, as if he were almost fainting.

"Now, mind you," said the doctor, "I clear my conscience—the name of rum for you is death."

And with that he went off to see my father, taking me with him by the arm.

"This is nothing," he said, as soon as he had closed the door. "I have drawn blood enough to keep him quiet a while; he should lie for a week where he is—that is the best thing for him and you; but another stroke would settle him."

CHAPTER III

THE BLACK SPOT

ABOUT noon I stopped at the captain's door with some cooling drinks and medicines. He was lying very much as we had left him, only a little higher, and he seemed both weak and excited.

"Jim," he said, "you're the only one here that's worth anything; and you know I've been always good to you. Never a month but I've given you a silver fourpenny for yourself. And now you see, mate, I'm pretty low, and deserted by all; and Jim, you'll bring me one noggin of rum, now won't you, matey?"

"The doctor——" I began.

But he broke in cursing the doctor, in a feeble voice, but heartily. "Doctors is all swabs," he said; "and that doctor there, why, what do he know about seafaring men? I been in places hot as pitch, and mates dropping round with Yellow Jack, and the blessed land a-heaving like the sea with earthquakes—what do the doctor know of lands like that?—and I lived on rum, I tell you. It's been meat and drink,

and man and wife, to me; and if I'm not to have my rum now I'm a poor old hulk on a lee-shore, my blood 'll be on you, Jim, and that doctor swab;" and he ran on again for a while with curses. "Look, Jim, how my fingers fidges," he continued, in the pleading tone. "I can't keep 'em still, not I. I haven't had a drop this blessed day. That doctor's a fool, I tell you. If I don't have a drain o' rum, Jim, I'll have the horrors; I seen some on 'em already. I seen old Flint in the corner there, behind you; as plain as print, I seen him; and if I get the horrors, I'm a man that has lived rough, and I'll raise Cain. Your doctor hisself said one glass wouldn't hurt me. I'll give you a golden guinea for a noggin, Jim."

He was growing more and more excited, and this alarmed me for my father, who was very low that day and needed quiet; besides, I was reassured by the doctor's words, now quoted to me, and rather offended by the offer of a bribe.

"I want none of your money," said I, "but what you owe my father. I'll get you one glass, and no more."

When I brought it to him, he seized it greedily, and drank it out.

"Ay, ay," said he, "that's some better, sure enough. And now, matey, did that doctor say how long I was to lie here in this old berth?"

"A week at least," said I.

"Thunder!" he cried. "A week! I can't

do that; they'd have the black spot on me by then. The lubbers is going about to get the wind of me this blessed moment; lubbers as couldn't keep what they got, and want to nail what is another's. Is that seamanly behaviour, now, I want to know? But I'm a saving soul. I never wasted good money of mine, nor lost it neither; and I'll trick 'em again. I'm not afraid on 'em. I'll shake out another reef, matey, and daddle 'em again."

As he was thus speaking, he had risen from bed with great difficulty, holding to my shoulder with a grip that almost made me cry out, and moving his legs like so much dead weight. His words, spirited as they were in meaning, contrasted sadly with the weakness of the voice in which they were uttered. He paused when he had got into a sitting position on the edge.

"That doctor's done me," he murmured. "My ears is singing. Lay me back."

Before I could do much to help him he had fallen back again to his former place, where he lay for a while silent.

"Jim," he said, at length, "you saw that seafaring man to-day?"

"Black Dog?" I asked.

"Ah! Black Dog," says he. "*He's* a bad 'un; but there's worse that put him on. Now, if I can't get away nohow, and they tip me the black spot, mind you, it's my old sea chest they're after; you get on a horse—you can,

can't you? Well, then, you get on a horse, and go to—well, yes, I will!—to that eternal doctor swab, and tell him to pipe all hands—magistrates and sich—and he'll lay 'em aboard at the 'Admiral Benbow'—all old Flint's crew, man and boy, all on 'em that's left. I was first mate, I was, old Flint's first mate, and I'm the on'y one as knows the place. He gave it to me at Savannah, when he lay a-dying, like as if I was to now, you see. But you won't peach unless they get the black spot on me, or unless you see that Black Dog again, or a sea-faring man with one leg, Jim—him above all."

"But what is the black spot, Captain?" I asked.

"That's a summons, mate. I'll tell you if they get that. But you keep your weather-eye open, Jim, and I'll share with you equals, upon my honour."

He wandered a little longer, his voice growing weaker; but soon after I had given him his medicine, which he took like a child, with the remark, "If ever a seaman wanted drugs, it's me," he fell at last into a heavy, swoon-like sleep, in which I left him. What I should have done had all gone well I do not know. Probably I should have told the whole story to the doctor; for I was in mortal fear lest the captain should repent of his confessions and make an end of me. But as things fell out, my poor father died quite suddenly that evening, which put all other

matters on one side. Our natural distress, the visits of the neighbours, the arranging of the funeral, and all the work of the inn to be carried on in the meanwhile, kept me so busy that I had scarcely time to think of the captain, far less to be afraid of him.

He got down-stairs next morning, to be sure, and had his meals as usual, though he ate little, and had more, I am afraid, than his usual supply of rum, for he helped himself out of the bar, scowling and blowing through his nose, and no one dared to cross him. On the night before the funeral he was as drunk as ever; and it was shocking, in that house of mourning, to hear him singing away at his ugly old sea-song; but, weak as he was, we were all in the fear of death for him, and the doctor was suddenly taken up with a case many miles away, and was never near the house after my father's death. I have said the captain was weak; and indeed he seemed rather to grow weaker than regain his strength. He clambered up- and down-stairs, and went from the parlour to the bar and back again, and sometimes put his nose out of doors to smell the sea, holding on to the walls as he went for support, and breathing hard and fast like a man on a steep mountain. He never particularly addressed me, and it is my belief he had as good as forgotten his confidences; but his temper was more flighty, and allowing for his bodily weakness, more violent

than ever. He had an alarming way now when he was drunk of drawing his cutlass and laying it bare before him on the table. But, with all that, he minded people less, and seemed shut up in his own thoughts and rather wandering. Once, for instance, to our extreme wonder, he piped up to a different air, a kind of country love-song, that he must have learned in his youth before he had begun to follow the sea.

So things passed until, the day after the funeral, and about three o'clock of a bitter, foggy, frosty afternoon, I was standing at the door for a moment, full of sad thoughts about my father, when I saw some one drawing slowly near along the road. He was plainly blind, for he tapped before him with a stick, and wore a great green shade over his eyes and nose; and he was hunched, as if with age or weakness, and wore a huge old tattered sea-cloak with a hood, that made him appear positively deformed. I never saw in my life a more dreadful looking figure. He stopped a little from the inn, and, raising his voice in an odd sing-song, addressed the air in front of him:—

"Will any kind friend inform a poor blind man, who has lost the precious sight of his eyes in the gracious defence of his native country, England, and God bless King George!—where or in what part of this country he may now be?"

"You are at the 'Admiral Benbow,' Black Hill Cove, my good man," said I.

"I hear a voice," said he—"a young voice. Will you give me your hand, my kind young friend, and lead me in?"

I held out my hand, and the horrible, soft-spoken, eyeless creature gripped it in a moment like a vice. I was so much startled that I struggled to withdraw; but the blind man pulled me close up to him with a single action of his arm.

"Now, boy," he said, "take me in to the captain."

"Sir," said I, "upon my word I dare not."

"Oh," he sneered, "that's it! Take me in straight, or I'll break your arm."

And he gave it, as he spoke, a wrench that made me cry out.

"Sir," said I, "it is for yourself I mean. The captain is not what he used to be. He sits with a drawn cutlass. Another gentleman——"

"Come, now, march," interrupted he; and I never heard a voice so cruel, and cold, and ugly as that blind man's. It cowed me more than the pain; and I began to obey him at once, walking straight in at the door and towards the parlour, where our sick old buccaneer was sitting, dazed with rum. The blind man clung close to me, holding me in one iron fist, and leaning almost more of his weight on me than I could carry. "Lead me straight up to him, and when I'm in view, cry out, 'Here's a friend for you, Bill.' If you don't, I'll do this;" and with that he gave me a twitch that I thought would have

made me faint. Between this and that, I was so utterly terrified of the blind beggar that I forgot my terror of the captain, and as I opened the parlour door, cried out the words he had ordered in a trembling voice.

The poor captain raised his eyes, and at one look the rum went out of him and left him staring sober. The expression of his face was not so much of terror as of mortal sickness. He made a movement to rise, but I do not believe he had enough force left in his body.

"Now, Bill, sit where you are," said the beggar. "If I can't see, I can hear a finger stirring. Business is business. Hold out your left hand. Boy, take his left hand by the wrist, and bring it near to my right."

We both obeyed him to the letter, and I saw him pass something from the hollow of the hand that held his stick into the palm of the captain's, which closed upon it instantly.

"And now that's done," said the blind man; and at the words he suddenly left hold of me, and with incredible accuracy and nimbleness, skipped out of the parlour and into the road, where, as I still stood motionless, I could hear his stick go tap-tap-tapping into the distance.

It was some time before either I or the captain seemed to gather our senses; but at length, and about at the same moment, I released his wrist, which I was still holding, and he drew in his hand and looked sharply into the palm.

"Ten o'clock!" he cried. "Six hours. We'll do them yet;" and he sprang to his feet.

Even as he did so, he reeled, put his hand to his throat, stood swaying for a moment, and then, with a peculiar sound, fell from his whole height face foremost to the floor.

I ran to him at once, calling to my mother. But haste was all in vain. The captain had been struck dead by thundering apoplexy. It is a curious thing to understand, for I had certainly never liked the man, though of late I had begun to pity him, but as soon as I saw that he was dead, I burst into a flood of tears. It was the second death I had known, and the sorrow of the first was still fresh in my heart.

CHAPTER IV

THE SEA CHEST

I LOST no time, of course, in telling my mother all that I knew, and perhaps should have told her long before, and we saw ourselves at once in a difficult and dangerous position. Some of the man's money—if he had any—was certainly due to us; but it was not likely that our captain's shipmates, above all the two specimens seen by me, Black Dog and the blind beggar, would be inclined to give up their booty in payment of the dead man's debts. The captain's order to mount at once and ride for Dr. Livesey would have left my mother alone and unprotected, which was not to be thought of. Indeed, it seemed impossible for either of us to remain much longer in the house: the fall of coals in the kitchen grate, the very ticking of the clock, filled us with alarms. The neighbourhood, to our ears, seemed haunted by approaching footsteps; and what between the dead body of the captain on the parlour floor, and the thought of that detestable blind beggar hovering near at hand, and ready to

return, there were moments when, as the saying goes, I jumped in my skin for terror. Something must speedily be resolved upon; and it occurred to us at last to go forth together and seek help in the neighbouring hamlet. No sooner said than done. Bare-headed as we were, we ran out at once in the gathering evening and the frosty fog.

The hamlet lay not many hundred yards away, though out of view, on the other side of the next cove; and what greatly encouraged me, it was in an opposite direction from that whence the blind man had made his appearance and whither he had presumably returned. We were not many minutes on the road, though we sometimes stopped to lay hold of each other and hearken. But there was no unusual sound —nothing but the low wash of the ripple and the croaking of the inmates of the wood.

It was already candle-light when we reached the hamlet, and I shall never forget how much I was cheered to see the yellow shine in doors and windows; but that, as it proved, was the best of the help we were likely to get in that quarter. For—you would have thought men would have been ashamed of themselves—no soul would consent to return with us to the "Admiral Benbow." The more we told of our troubles, the more—man, woman, and child—they clung to the shelter of their houses. The name of Captain Flint, though it was strange

to me, was well enough known to some there, and carried a great weight of terror. Some of the men who had been to field-work on the far side of the "Admiral Benbow" remembered, besides, to have seen several strangers on the road, and, taking them to be smugglers, to have bolted away; and one at least had seen a little lugger in what we called Kitt's Hole. For that matter, any one who was a comrade of the captain's was enough to frighten them to death. And the short and the long of the matter was, that while we could get several who were willing enough to ride to Dr. Livesey's, which lay in another direction, not one would help us to defend the inn.

They say cowardice is infectious; but then argument is, on the other hand, a great emboldener; and so when each had said his say, my mother made them a speech. She would not, she declared, lose money that belonged to her fatherless boy; "if none of the rest of you dare," she said, "Jim and I dare. Back we will go, the way we came, and small thanks to you big, hulking, chicken-hearted men. We'll have the chest open, if we die for it. And I'll thank you for that bag, Mrs. Crossley, to bring back our lawful money in."

Of course, I said I would go with my mother; and of course they all cried out at our foolhardiness; but even then not a man would go along with us. All they would do was to give me a

loaded pistol, lest we were attacked; and to promise to have horses ready saddled, in case we were pursued on our return; while one lad was to ride forward to the doctor's in search of armed assistance.

My heart was beating finely when we two set forth in the cold night upon this dangerous venture. A full moon was beginning to rise and peered redly through the upper edges of the fog, and this increased our haste, for it was plain, before we came forth again, that all would be as bright as day, and our departure exposed to the eyes of any watchers. We slipped along the hedges, noiseless and swift, nor did we see or hear anything to increase our terrors, till, to our relief, the door of the "Admiral Benbow" had closed behind us.

I slipped the bolt at once, and we stood and panted for a moment in the dark, alone in the house with the dead captain's body. Then my mother got a candle in the bar, and, holding each other's hands, we advanced into the parlour. He lay as we had left him, on his back, with his eyes open, and one arm stretched out.

"Draw down the blind, Jim," whispered my mother; "they might come and watch outside. And now," said she, when I had done so, "we have to get the key off *that;* and who's to touch it, I should like to know!" and she gave a kind of sob as she said the words.

I went down on my knees at once. On the floor close to his hand there was a little round of paper, blackened on the one side. I could not doubt that this was the *black spot;* and taking it up, I found written on the other side, in a very good, clear hand, this short message: "You have till ten to-night."

"He had till ten, mother," said I; and just as I said it, our old clock began striking. This sudden noise startled us shockingly; but the news was good, for it was only six.

"Now, Jim," she said, "that key."

I felt in his pockets, one after another. A few small coins, a thimble, and some thread and big needles, a piece of pigtail tobacco bitten away at the end, his gully with the crooked handle, a pocket compass, and a tinder-box, were all that they contained, and I began to despair.

"Perhaps it's round his neck," suggested my mother.

Overcoming a strong repugnance, I tore open his shirt at the neck, and there, sure enough, hanging to a bit of tarry string, which I cut with his own gully, we found the key. At this triumph we were filled with hope, and hurried up-stairs, without delay, to the little room where he had slept so long, and where his box had stood since the day of his arrival.

It was like any other seaman's chest on the outside, the initial "B." burned on the top of it

with a hot iron, and the corners somewhat smashed and broken as by long, rough usage.

"Give me the key," said my mother; and though the lock was very stiff, she had turned it and thrown back the lid in a twinkling.

A strong smell of tobacco and tar rose from the interior, but nothing was to be seen on the top except a suit of very good clothes, carefully brushed and folded. They had never been worn, my mother said. Under that, the miscellany began—a quadrant, a tin canikin, several sticks of tobacco, two brace of very handsome pistols, a piece of bar silver, an old Spanish watch and some other trinkets of little value and mostly of foreign make, a pair of compasses mounted with brass, and five or six curious West Indian shells. I have often wondered since why he should have carried about these shells with him in his wandering, guilty, and hunted life.

In the meantime, we had found nothing of any value but the silver and the trinkets, and neither of these were in our way. Underneath there was an old boat-cloak, whitened with sea-salt on many a harbour-bar. My mother pulled it up with impatience, and there lay before us, the last things in the chest, a bundle tied up in oilcloth, and looking like papers, and a canvas bag, that gave forth, at a touch, the jingle of gold.

"I'll show these rogues that I'm an honest

woman," said my mother. "I'll have my dues, and not a farthing over. Hold Mrs. Crossley's bag." And she began to count over the amount of the captain's score from the sailor's bag into the one that I was holding.

It was a long, difficult business, for the coins were of all countries and sizes—doubloons, and louis-d'ors, and guineas, and pieces of eight, and I know not what besides, all shaken together at random. The guineas, too, were about the scarcest, and it was with these only that my mother knew how to make her count.

When we were about half-way through, I suddenly put my hand upon her arm; for I had heard in the silent, frosty air, a sound that brought my heart into my mouth—the tap-tapping of the blind man's stick upon the frozen road. It drew nearer and nearer, while we sat holding our breath. Then it struck sharp on the inn-door, and then we could hear the handle being turned, and the bolt rattling as the wretched being tried to enter; and then there was a long time of silence both within and without. At last the tapping re-commenced, and, to our indescribable joy and gratitude, died slowly away again until it ceased to be heard.

"Mother," said I, "take the whole and let's be going;" for I was sure the bolted door must have seemed suspicious, and would bring the whole hornet's nest about our ears; though how thankful I was that I had bolted it, none

could tell who had never met that terrible blind man.

But my mother, frightened as she was, would not consent to take a fraction more than was due to her, and was obstinately unwilling to be content with less. It was not yet seven, she said, by a long way; she knew her rights and she would have them; and she was still arguing with me, when a low whistle sounded a good way off upon the hill. That was enough, and more than enough, for both of us.

"I'll take what I have," she said, jumping to her feet.

"And I'll take this to square the count," said I, picking up the oilskin packet.

Next moment we were both groping downstairs, leaving the candle by the empty chest; and the next we had opened the door and were in full retreat. We had not started a moment too soon. The fog was rapidly dispersing; already the moon shone quite clear on the high ground on either side; and it was only in the exact bottom of the dell and round the tavern door that a thin veil still hung unbroken to conceal the first steps of our escape. Far less than half-way to the hamlet, very little beyond the bottom of the hill, we must come forth into the moonlight. Nor was this all; for the sound of several footsteps running came already to our ears, and as we looked back in their direction, a light tossing to and fro and still

rapidly advancing, showed that one of the new-comers carried a lantern.

"My dear," said my mother suddenly, "take the money and run on. I am going to faint."

This was certainly the end of both of us, I thought. How I cursed the cowardice of the neighbours; how I blamed my poor mother for her honesty and her greed, for her past foolhardiness and present weakness! We were just at the little bridge, by good fortune; and I helped her, tottering as she was, to the edge of the bank, where, sure enough, she gave a sigh and fell on my shoulder. I do not know how I found the strength to do it at all, and I am afraid it was roughly done; but I managed to drag her down the bank and a little way under the arch. Farther I could not move her, for the bridge was too low to let me do more than crawl below it. So there we had to stay—my mother almost entirely exposed, and both of us within earshot of the inn.

CHAPTER V

THE LAST OF THE BLIND MAN

MY curiosity, in a sense, was stronger than my fear; for I could not remain where I was, but crept back to the bank again, whence, sheltering my head behind a bush of broom, I might command the road before our door. I was scarcely in position ere my enemies began to arrive, seven or eight of them, running hard, their feet beating out of time along the road, and the man with the lantern some paces in front. Three men ran together, hand in hand; and I made out, even through the mist, that the middle man of this trio was the blind beggar. The next moment his voice showed me that I was right.

"Down with the door!" he cried.

"Ay, ay, sir!" answered two or three; and a rush was made upon the "Admiral Benbow," the lantern-bearer following; and then I could see them pause, and hear speeches passed in a lower key, as if they were surprised to find the door open. But the pause was brief, for the blind man again issued his commands. His

voice sounded louder and higher, as if he were afire with eagerness and rage.

"In, in, in!" he shouted, and cursed them for their delay.

Four or five of them obeyed at once, two remaining on the road with the formidable beggar. There was a pause, then a cry of surprise, and then a voice shouting from the house:—

"Bill's dead."

But the blind man swore at them again for their delay.

"Search him, some of you shirking lubbers, and the rest of you aloft and get the chest," he cried.

I could hear their feet rattling up our old stairs, so that the house must have shook with it. Promptly afterwards, fresh sounds of astonishment arose; the window of the captain's room was thrown open with a slam and a jingle of broken glass; and a man leaned out into the moonlight, head and shoulders, and addressed the blind beggar on the road below him.

"Pew," he cried, "they've been before us. Some one's turned the chest out alow and aloft."

"Is it there?" roared Pew.

"The money's there."

The blind man cursed the money.

"Flint's fist, I mean," he cried.

"We don't see it here nohow," returned the man.

"Here, you below there, is it on Bill?" cried the blind man again.

At that, another fellow, probably he who had

remained below to search the captain's body, came to the door of the inn. "Bill's been overhauled a'ready," said he, "nothin' left."

"It's these people of the inn—it's that boy. I wish I had put his eyes out!" cried the blind man, Pew. "They were here no time ago—they had the door bolted when I tried it. Scatter, lads, and find 'em."

"Sure enough, they left their glim here," said the fellow from the window.

"Scatter and find 'em! Rout the house out!" reiterated Pew, striking with his stick upon the road.

Then there followed a great to-do through all our old inn, heavy feet pounding to and fro, furniture thrown over, doors kicked in, until the very rocks re-echoed, and the men came out again, one after another, on the road, and declared that we were nowhere to be found. And just then the same whistle that had alarmed my mother and myself over the dead captain's money was once more clearly audible through the night, but this time twice repeated. I had thought it to be the blind man's trumpet, so to speak, summoning his crew to the assault, but I now found that it was a signal from the hillside towards the hamlet, and, from its effect upon the buccaneers, a signal to warn them of approaching danger.

"There's Dirk again," said one. "Twice. We'll have to budge, mates."

"Budge, you skulk!" cried Pew. "Dirk was a fool and a coward from the first—you wouldn't mind him. They must be close by; they can't be far; you have your hands on it! Scatter and look for them, dogs! Oh, shiver my soul," he cried, "if I had eyes!"

This appeal seemed to produce some effect, for two of the fellows began to look here and there among the lumber, but half-heartedly, I thought, and with half an eye to their own danger all the time, while the rest stood irresolute on the road.

"You have your hands on thousands, you fools, and you hang a leg! You'd be as rich as kings if you could find it, and you know it's here, and you stand there skulking. There wasn't one of you dared face Bill, and I did it—a blind man! And I'm to lose my chance for you! I'm to be a poor, crawling beggar, sponging for rum, when I might be rolling in a coach! If you had the pluck of a weevil in a biscuit you would catch them still."

"Hang it, Pew, we've got the doubloons!" grumbled one.

"They might have hid the blessed thing," said another. "Take the Georges, Pew, and don't stand here squalling."

Squalling was the word for it, Pew's anger rose so high at these objections; till at last, his passion completely taking the upper hand, he struck at them right and left in his blindness,

and his stick sounded heavily on more than one.

These, in their turn, cursed back at the blind miscreant, threatened him in horrid terms, and tried in vain to catch the stick and wrest it from his grasp.

This quarrel was the saving of us; for while it was still raging, another sound came from the top of the hill on the side of the hamlet—the tramp of horses galloping. Almost at the same time a pistol-shot, flash and report, came from the hedge side. And that was plainly the last signal of danger; for the buccaneers turned at once and ran, separating in every direction, one seaward along the cove, one slant across the hill, and so on, so that in half a minute not a sign of them remained but Pew. Him they had deserted, whether in sheer panic or out of revenge for his ill words and blows, I know not; but there he remained behind, tapping up and down the road in a frenzy, and groping and calling for his comrades. Finally he took the wrong turn, and ran a few steps past me, towards the hamlet, crying:—

"Johnny, Black Dog, Dirk," and other names, "you won't leave old Pew, mates—not old Pew!"

Just then the noise of horses topped the rise and four or five riders came in sight in the moonlight, and swept at full gallop down the slope.

At this Pew saw his error, turned with a scream, and ran straight for the ditch, into which

he rolled. But he was on his feet again in a second, and made another dash, now utterly bewildered, right under the nearest of the coming horses.

The rider tried to save him, but in vain. Down went Pew with a cry that rang high into the night, and the four hoofs trampled and spurned him and passed by. He fell on his side, then gently collapsed upon his face, and moved no more.

I leaped to my feet and hailed the riders. They were pulling up, at any rate, horrified at the accident; and I soon saw what they were. One, tailing out behind the rest, was a lad that had gone from the hamlet to Dr. Livesey's; the rest were revenue officers, whom he had met by the way, and with whom he had had the intelligence to return at once. Some news of the lugger in Kitt's Hole had found its way to Supervisor Dance, and set him forth that night in our direction, and to that circumstance my mother and I owed our preservation from death.

Pew was dead, stone dead. As for my mother, when we had carried her up to the hamlet, a little cold water and salts and that soon brought her back again, and she was none the worse for her terror, though she still continued to deplore the balance of the money. In the meantime the supervisor rode on, as fast as he could, to Kitt's Hole; but his men had to dismount and

grope down the dingle, leading, and sometimes supporting, their horses, and in continual fear of ambushes; so it was no great matter for surprise that when they got down to the Hole the lugger was already under way, though still close in. He hailed her. A voice replied, telling him to keep out of the moonlight, or he would get some lead in him, and at the same time a bullet whistled close by his arm. Soon after, the lugger doubled the point and disappeared. Mr. Dance stood there, as he said, "like a fish out of water," and all he could do was to despatch a man to B—— to warn the cutter. "And that," said he, "is just about as good as nothing. They've got off clean, and there's an end. Only," he added, "I'm glad I trod on Master Pew's corns;" for by this time he had heard my story.

I went back with him to the "Admiral Benbow," and you cannot imagine a house in such a state of smash; the very clock had been thrown down by these fellows in their furious hunt after my mother and myself; and though nothing had actually been taken away except the captain's money-bag and a little silver from the till, I could see at once that we were ruined. Mr. Dance could make nothing of the scene.

"They got the money, you say? Well, then, Hawkins, what in fortune were they after? More money, I suppose?"

"No, sir; not money, I think," replied I.

"In fact, sir, I believe I have the thing in my breast-pocket; and, to tell you the truth, I should like to get it put in safety."

"To be sure, boy; quite right," said he. "I'll take it, if you like."

"I thought, perhaps Dr. Livesey——" I began.

"Perfectly right," he interrupted, very cheerily, "perfectly right—a gentleman and a magistrate. And, now I come to think of it, I might as well ride round there myself and report to him or squire. Master Pew's dead, when all's done; not that I regret it, but he's dead, you see, and people will make it out against an officer of his Majesty's revenue, if make it out they can. Now, I'll tell you, Hawkins: if you like, I'll take you along."

I thanked him heartily for the offer, and we walked back to the hamlet where the horses were. By the time I had told mother of my purpose they were all in the saddle.

"Dogger," said Mr. Dance, "you have a good horse; take up this lad behind you."

As soon as I was mounted, holding on to Dogger's belt, the supervisor gave the word, and the party struck out at a bouncing trot on the road to Dr. Livesey's house.

CHAPTER VI

THE CAPTAIN'S PAPERS

WE rode hard all the way, till we drew up before Dr. Livesey's door. The house was all dark to the front.

Mr. Dance told me to jump down and knock, and Dogger gave me a stirrup to descend by. The door was opened almost at once by the maid.

"Is Dr. Livesey in?" I asked.

No, she said; he had come home in the afternoon, but had gone up to the Hall to dine and pass the evening with the squire.

"So there we go, boys," said Mr. Dance.

This time, as the distance was short, I did not mount, but ran with Dogger's stirrup-leather to the lodge gates, and up the long, leafless, moonlit avenue to where the white line of the Hall buildings looked on either hand on great old gardens. Here Mr. Dance dismounted, and, taking me along with him, was admitted at a word into the house.

The servant led us down a matted passage, and showed us at the end into a great library, all lined with book-cases and busts upon the

top of them, where the squire and Dr. Livesey sat, pipe in hand, on either side of a bright fire.

I had never seen the squire so near at hand. He was a tall man, over six feet high, and broad in proportion, and he had a bluff, rough-and-ready face, all roughened and reddened and lined in his long travels. His eyebrows were very black, and moved readily, and this gave him a look of some temper, not bad, you would say, but quick and high.

"Come in, Mr. Dance," says he, very stately and condescending.

"Good-evening, Dance," says the doctor, with a nod. "And good-evening to you, friend Jim. What good wind brings you here?"

The supervisor stood up straight and stiff, and told his story like a lesson; and you should have seen how the two gentlemen leaned forward and looked at each other, and forgot to smoke in their surprise and interest. When they heard how my mother went back to the inn, Dr. Livesey fairly slapped his thigh, and the squire cried "Bravo!" and broke his long pipe against the grate. Long before it was done, Mr. Trelawney (that, you will remember, was the squire's name) had got up from his seat, and was striding about the room, and the doctor, as if to hear the better, had taken off his powdered wig, and sat there, looking very strange indeed with his own close-cropped black poll.

At last Mr. Dance finished the story.

"Mr. Dance," said the squire, "you are a very noble fellow. And as for riding down that black, atrocious miscreant, I regard it as an act of virtue, sir, like stamping on a cockroach. This lad Hawkins is a trump, I perceive.—Hawkins, will you ring that bell? Mr. Dance must have some ale."

"And so, Jim," said the doctor, "you have the thing that they were after, have you?"

"Here it is, sir," said I, and gave him the oil-skin packet.

The doctor looked it all over, as if his fingers were itching to open it; but, instead of doing that, he put it quietly in the pocket of his coat.

"Squire," said he, "when Dance has had his ale he must, of course, be off on his Majesty's service; but I mean to keep Jim Hawkins here to sleep at my house, and, with your permission, I propose we should have up the cold pie, and let him sup."

"As you will, Livesey," said the squire; "Hawkins has earned better than cold pie."

So a big pigeon pie was brought in and put on a side-table, and I made a hearty supper, for I was as hungry as a hawk, while Mr. Dance was further complimented, and at last dismissed.

"And now, squire," said the doctor.

"And now, Livesey," said the squire in the same breath.

"One at a time, one at a time," laughed Dr. Livesey. "You have heard of this Flint, I suppose?"

"Heard of him!" cried the squire. "Heard of him, you say! He was the bloodthirstiest buccaneer that sailed. Blackbeard was a child to Flint. The Spaniards were so prodigiously afraid of him, that, I tell you, sir, I was sometimes proud he was an Englishman. I've seen his top-sails with these eyes, off Trinidad, and the cowardly son of a rum-puncheon that I sailed with put back—put back, sir, into Port-of-Spain."

"Well, I've heard of him myself, in England," said the doctor. "But the point is, had he money?"

"Money!" cried the squire. "Have you heard the story? What were these villains after but money? What do they care for but money? For what would they risk their rascal carcasses but money?"

"That we shall soon know," replied the doctor. "But you are so confoundedly hot-headed and exclamatory that I cannot get a word in. What I want to know is this: Supposing that I have here in my pocket some clue to where Flint buried his treasure, will that treasure amount to much?"

"Amount, sir!" cried the squire. "It will amount to this: if we have the clue you talk about, I fit out a ship in Bristol dock, and take

you and Hawkins here along, and I'll have that treasure if I search a year."

"Very well," said the doctor. "Now, then, if Jim is agreeable, we'll open the packet"; and he laid it before him on the table.

The bundle was sewed together, and the doctor had to get out his instrument-case, and cut the stitches with his medical scissors. It contained two things—a book and a sealed paper.

"First of all we'll try the book," observed the doctor.

The squire and I were both peering over his shoulder as he opened it, for Dr. Livesey had kindly motioned me to come round from the side-table, where I had been eating, to enjoy the sport of the search. On the first page there were only some scraps of writing, such as a man with a pen in his hand might make for idleness or practice. One was the same as the tattoo-mark, "Billy Bones his fancy"; then there was "Mr. W. Bones, mate." "No more rum." "Off Palm Key he got itt"; and some other snatches, mostly single words, and unintelligible. I could not help wondering who it was that had "got itt," and what "itt" was that he got. A knife in his back as like as not.

"Not much instruction there," said Dr. Livesey, as he passed on.

The next ten or twelve pages were filled with a curious series of entries. There was a date at one end of the line and at the other a

sum of money, as in common account-books; but instead of explanatory writing, only a varying number of crosses between the two. On the 12th of June, 1745, for instance, a sum of seventy pounds had plainly become due to some one, and there was nothing but six crosses to explain the cause. In a few cases, to be sure, the name of a place would be added, as "Offe Caraccas"; or a mere entry of latitude and longitude, as "62° 17′ 20″, 19° 2′ 40″."

The record lasted over nearly twenty years, the amount of the separate entries growing larger as time went on, and at the end a grand total had been made out after five or six wrong additions, and these words appended, "Bones his pile."

"I can't make head or tail of this," said Dr. Livesey.

"The thing is as clear as noonday," cried the squire. "This is the black-hearted hound's account-book. These crosses stand for the names of ships or towns that they sank or plundered. The sums are the scoundrel's share, and where he feared an ambiguity, you see he added something clearer. 'Offe Caraccas,' now; you see, here was some unhappy vessel boarded off that coast. God help the poor souls that manned her—coral long ago."

"Right!" said the doctor. "See what it is to be a traveller. Right! And the amounts increase, you see, as he rose in rank."

There was little else in the volume but a few bearings of places noted in the blank leaves towards the end, and a table for reducing French, English, and Spanish moneys to a common value.

"Thrifty man!" cried the doctor. "He wasn't the one to be cheated."

"And now," said the squire, "for the other."

The paper had been sealed in several places with a thimble by way of seal; the very thimble, perhaps, that I had found in the captain's pocket. The doctor opened the seals with great care, and there fell out the map of an island, with latitude and longitude, soundings, names of hills, and bays and inlets, and every particular that would be needed to bring a ship to a safe anchorage upon its shores. It was about nine miles long and five across, shaped, you might say, like a fat dragon standing up, and had two fine land-locked harbours, and a hill in the centre part marked "The Spy-glass." There were several additions of a later date; but, above all, three crosses of red ink—two on the north part of the island, one in the south-west, and, beside this last, in the same red ink, and in a small, neat hand, very different from the captain's tottery characters, these words: "Bulk of treasure here."

Over on the back the same hand had written this further information:—

"Tall tree, Spy-glass shoulder, bearing a point to the N. of N. N. E.

"Skeleton Island E. S. E. and by E.

"Ten feet.

"The bar silver is in the north cache; you can find it by the trend of the east hummock, ten fathoms south of the black crag with the face on it.

"The arms are easy found, in the sand hill, N. point of north inlet cape, bearing E. and a quarter N. J. F."

That was all; but brief as it was, and, to me, incomprehensible, it filled the squire and Dr. Livesey with delight.

"Livesey," said the squire, "you will give up this wretched practice at once. To-morrow I start for Bristol. In three weeks' time—three weeks!—two weeks—ten days—we'll have the best ship, sir, and the choicest crew in England. Hawkins shall come as cabin-boy. You'll make a famous cabin-boy, Hawkins. You, Livesey, are ship's doctor; I am admiral. We'll take Redruth, Joyce, and Hunter. We'll have favourable winds, a quick passage, and not the least difficulty in finding the spot, and money to eat—to roll in—to play duck-and-drake with ever after."

"Trelawney," said the doctor, "I'll go with you; and I'll go bail for it, so will Jim, and be a credit to the undertaking. There's only one man I'm afraid of."

"And who's that?" cried the squire. "Name the dog, sir!"

"You," replied the doctor; "for you cannot

hold your tongue. We are not the only men who know of this paper. These fellows who attacked the inn to-night—bold, desperate blades, for sure—and the rest who stayed aboard that lugger, and more, I dare say, not far off, are, one and all, through thick and thin, bound that they'll get that money. We must none of us go alone till we get to sea. Jim and I shall stick together in the meanwhile: you'll take Joyce and Hunter when you ride to Bristol, and, from first to last, not one of us must breathe a word of what we've found."

"Livesey," returned the squire, "you are always in the right of it. I'll be as silent as the grave."

PART II
THE SEA COOK

CHAPTER VII

I GO TO BRISTOL

IT was longer than the squire imagined ere we were ready for the sea, and none of our first plans—not even Dr. Livesey's, of keeping me beside him—could be carried out as we intended. The doctor had to go to London for a physician to take charge of his practice; the squire was hard at work at Bristol; and I lived on at the Hall under the charge of old Redruth, the gamekeeper, almost a prisoner, but full of sea-dreams and the most charming anticipations of strange islands and adventures. I brooded by the hour together over the map, all the details of which I well remembered. Sitting by the fire in the housekeeper's room, I approached that island in my fancy, from every possible direction; I explored every acre of its surface; I climbed a thousand times to that tall hill they call the Spy-glass, and from the top enjoyed the most wonderful and changing prospects. Sometimes the isle was thick with savages, with whom we fought; sometimes full of dangerous animals that hunted us; but in all

my fancies nothing occurred to me so strange and tragic as our actual adventures.

So the weeks passed on, till one fine day there came a letter addressed to Dr. Livesey, with this addition, "To be opened, in the case of his absence, by Tom Redruth, or young Hawkins." Obeying this order, we found, or rather, I found—for the gamekeeper was a poor hand at reading anything but print—the following important news:—

"*Old Anchor Inn, Bristol, March 1, 17—.*

"DEAR LIVESEY,—As I do not know whether you are at the Hall or still in London, I send this in double to both places.

"The ship is bought and fitted. She lies at anchor, ready for sea. You never imagined a sweeter schooner—a child might sail her—two hundred tons; name, *Hispaniola.*

"I got her through my old friend, Blandly, who has proved himself throughout the most surprising trump. The admirable fellow literally slaved in my interest, and so, I may say, did every one in Bristol, as soon as they got wind of the port we sailed for—treasure, I mean."

"Redruth," said I, interrupting the letter, "Dr. Livesey will not like that. The squire has been talking, after all."

"Well, who's a better right?" growled the gamekeeper. "A pretty rum go if squire ain't to talk for Dr. Livesey, I should think."

At that I gave up all attempt at commentary, and read straight on:—

"Blandly himself found the *Hispaniola*, and by the most admirable management got her for the merest trifle. There is a class of men in Bristol monstrously prejudiced against Blandly.

They go the length of declaring that this honest creature would do anything for money, that the *Hispaniola* belonged to him, and that he sold it me absurdly high—the most transparent calumnies. None of them dare, however, to deny the merits of the ship.

"So far there was not a hitch. The workpeople, to be sure—riggers and what not—were most annoyingly slow; but time cured that. It was the crew that troubled me.

"I wished a round score of men—in case of natives, buccaneers, or the odious French—and I had the worry of the deuce itself to find so much as half a dozen, till the most remarkable stroke of fortune brought me the very man that I required.

"I was standing on the dock, when, by the merest accident, I fell in talk with him. I found he was an old sailor, kept a public-house, knew all the seafaring men in Bristol, had lost his health ashore, and wanted a good berth as cook to get to sea again. He had hobbled down there that morning, he said, to get a smell of the salt.

"I was monstrously touched—so would you have been—and, out of pure pity, I engaged him on the spot to be ship's cook. Long John Silver, he is called, and has lost a leg; but that I regarded as a recommendation, since he lost it in his country's service, under the immortal Hawke. He has no pension, Livesey. Imagine the abominable age we live in!

"Well, sir, I thought I had only found a cook, but it was a crew I had discovered. Between Silver and myself we got together in a few days a company of the toughest old salts imaginable—not pretty to look at, but fellows, by their faces, of the most indomitable spirit. I declare we could fight a frigate.

"Long John even got rid of two out of the six or seven I had already engaged. He showed me in a moment that they were just the sort of fresh-water swabs we had to fear in an adventure of importance.

"I am in the most magnificent health and spirits, eating like a bull, sleeping like a tree, yet I shall not enjoy a moment till I hear my old tarpaulins tramping round the capstan. Seaward ho! Hang the treasure! It's the glory of the sea that has turned my head. So now, Livesey, come post; do not lose an hour, if you respect me.

"Let young Hawkins go at once to see his mother, with Redruth for a guard; and then both come full speed to Bristol.

"JOHN TRELAWNEY.

"*Postscript.*—I did not tell you that Blandly, who, by the way, is to send a consort after us, if we don't turn up by the end of August, had found an admirable fellow for sailing-master—a stiff man, which I regret, but, in all other respects, a treasure. Long John Silver unearthed a very competent man for a mate, a man named Arrow. I have a boatswain who pipes, Livesey; so things shall go man-o'-war fashion on board the good ship *Hispaniola.*

"I forgot to tell you that Silver is a man of substance; I know of my own knowledge that he has a banker's account, which has never been overdrawn. He leaves his wife to manage the inn; and as she is a woman of colour, a pair of old bachelors like you and I may be excused for guessing that it is the wife, quite as much as the health, that sends him back to roving. J. T.

"*P.P.S.* —Hawkins may stay one night with his mother.

J. T."

You can fancy the excitement into which that letter put me. I was half beside myself with glee; and if ever I despised a man, it was old Tom Redruth, who could do nothing but grumble and lament. Any of the under-gamekeepers would gladly have changed places with him; but such was not the squire's pleasure, and the squire's pleasure was like law among them all. Nobody but old Redruth would have dared so much as even to grumble.

The next morning he and I set out on foot for the "Admiral Benbow," and there I found my mother in good health and spirits. The captain, who had so long been a cause of so much dis-

comfort, was gone where the wicked cease from troubling. The squire had had everything repaired, and the public rooms and the sign repainted, and had added some furniture—above all a beautiful arm-chair for mother in the bar. He had found her a boy as an apprentice also, so that she should not want help while I was gone.

It was on seeing that boy that I understood, for the first time, my situation. I had thought up to that moment of the adventures before me, not at all of the home that I was leaving; and now, at sight of this clumsy stranger, who was to stay here in my place beside my mother, I had my first attack of tears. I am afraid I led that boy a dog's life; for as he was new to the work, I had a hundred opportunities of setting him right and putting him down, and I was not slow to profit by them.

The night passed, and the next day, after dinner, Redruth and I were afoot again, and on the road. I said good-bye to mother and the cove where I had lived since I was born, and the dear old "Admiral Benbow"—since he was repainted, no longer quite so dear. One of my last thoughts was of the captain, who had so often strode along the beach with his cocked hat, his sabre-cut cheek, and his old brass telescope. Next moment we had turned the corner, and my home was out of sight.

The mail picked us up about dusk at the "Royal George" on the heath. I was wedged

in between Redruth and a stout old gentleman, and in spite of the swift motion and the cold night air, I must have dozed a great deal from the very first, and then slept like a log up hill and down dale through stage after stage; for when I was awakened, at last, it was by a punch in the ribs, and I opened my eyes, to find that we were standing still before a large building in a city street, and that the day had already broken a long time.

"Where are we?" I asked.

"Bristol," said Tom. "Get down."

Mr. Trelawney had taken up his residence at an inn far down the docks, to superintend the work upon the schooner. Thither we had now to walk, and our way, to my great delight, lay along the quays and beside the great multitude of ships of all sizes and rigs and nations. In one, sailors were singing at their work; in another, there were men aloft, high over my head, hanging to threads that seemed no thicker than a spider's. Though I had lived by the shore all my life, I seemed never to have been near the sea till then. The smell of tar and salt was something new. I saw the most wonderful figureheads, that had all been far over the ocean. I saw, besides, many old sailors, with rings in their ears, and whiskers curled in ringlets, and tarry pigtails, and their swaggering, clumsy sea-walk; and if I had seen as many kings or archbishops I could not have been more delighted.

I GO TO BRISTOL

And I was going to sea myself; to sea in a schooner, with a piping boatswain, and pig-tailed singing seamen; to sea, bound for an unknown island, and to seek for buried treasures!

While I was still in this delightful dream, we came suddenly in front of a large inn, and met Squire Trelawney, all dressed out like a sea-officer, in stout blue cloth, coming out of the door with a smile on his face, and a capital imitation of a sailor's walk.

"Here you are," he cried, "and the doctor came last night from London. Bravo! the ship's company complete!"

"Oh, sir," cried I, "when do we sail?"

"Sail!" says he. "We sail to-morrow!"

CHAPTER VIII

AT THE SIGN OF THE "SPY-GLASS"

WHEN I had done breakfasting, the squire gave me a note addressed to John Silver, at the sign of the "Spy-glass," and told me I should easily find the place by following the line of the docks, and keeping a bright look-out for a little tavern with a large brass telescope for sign. I set off, overjoyed at this opportunity to see some more of the ships and seamen, and picked my way among a great crowd of people and carts and bales, for the dock was now at its busiest, until I found the tavern in question.

It was a bright enough little place of entertainment. The sign was newly painted; the windows had neat red curtains; the floor was cleanly sanded. There was a street on each side, and an open door on both, which made the large, low room pretty clear to see in, in spite of clouds of tobacco smoke.

The customers were mostly seafaring men; and they talked so loudly that I hung at the door, almost afraid to enter.

As I was waiting, a man came out of a side room, and, at a glance, I was sure he must be Long John. His left leg was cut off close by the hip, and under the left shoulder he carried a crutch, which he managed with wonderful dexterity, hopping about upon it like a bird. He was very tall and strong, with a face as big as a ham—plain and pale, but intelligent and smiling. Indeed, he seemed in the most cheerful spirits, whistling as he moved about among the tables, with a merry word or a slap on the shoulder for the more favoured of his guests.

Now, to tell you the truth, from the very first mention of Long John in Squire Trelawney's letter, I had taken a fear in my mind that he might prove to be the very one-legged sailor whom I had watched for so long at the old "Benbow." But one look at the man before me was enough. I had seen the captain, and Black Dog, and the blind man Pew, and I thought I knew what a buccaneer was like—a very different creature, according to me, from this clean and pleasant-tempered landlord.

I plucked up courage at once, crossed the threshold, and walked right up to the man, where he stood, propped on his crutch, talking to a customer.

"Mr. Silver, sir?" I asked, holding out the note.

"Yes, my lad," said he; "such is my name, to be sure. And who may you be?" And

then as he saw the squire's letter, he seemed to me to give something almost like a start.

"Oh!" said he, quite loud, and offering his hand, "I see. You are our new cabin-boy; pleased I am to see you."

And he took my hand in his large firm grasp.

Just then one of the customers at the far side rose suddenly and made for the door. It was close by him, and he was out in the street in a moment. But his hurry had attracted my notice, and I recognised him at a glance. It was the tallow-faced man, wanting two fingers, who had come first to the "Admiral Benbow."

"Oh," I cried, "stop him! it's Black Dog!"

"I don't care two coppers who he is," cried Silver. "But he hasn't paid his score. Harry, run and catch him."

One of the others who was nearest the door leaped up, and started in pursuit.

"If he were Admiral Hawke he shall pay his score," cried Silver; and then, relinquishing my hand—"Who did you say he was?" he asked. "Black what?"

"Dog, sir," said I. "Has Mr. Trelawney not told you of the buccaneers? He was one of them."

"So?" cried Silver. "In my house! Ben, run and help Harry. One of those swabs, was he? Was that you drinking with him, Morgan? Step up here."

The man whom he called Morgan—an old,

grey-haired, mahogany-faced sailor—came forward pretty sheepishly, rolling his quid.

"Now, Morgan," said Long John, very sternly; "you never clapped your eyes on that Black—Black Dog before, did you, now?"

"Not I, sir," said Morgan, with a salute.

"You didn't know his name, did you?"

"No, sir."

"By the powers, Tom Morgan, it's as good for you!" exclaimed the landlord. "If you had been mixed up with the like of that, you would never have put another foot in my house, you may lay to that. And what was he saying to you?"

"I don't rightly know, sir," answered Morgan.

"Do you call that a head on your shoulders, or a blessed dead-eye?" cried Long John. "Don't rightly know, don't you! Perhaps you don't happen to rightly know who you was speaking to, perhaps? Come, now, what was he jawing—v'yages, cap'ns, ships? Pipe up! What was it?"

"We was a-talkin' of keel-hauling," answered Morgan.

"Keel-hauling, was you? and a mighty suitable thing, too, and you may lay to that. Get back to your place for a lubber, Tom."

And then, as Morgan rolled back to his seat, Silver added to me in a confidential whisper, that was very flattering, as I thought:—

"He's quite an honest man, Tom Morgan,

on'y stupid. And now," he ran on again, aloud, "let's see—Black Dog? No, I don't know the name, not I. Yet I kind of think I've—yes, I've seen the swab. He used to come here with a blind beggar, he used."

"That he did, you may be sure," said I. "I knew that blind man, too. His name was Pew."

"It was!" cried Silver, now quite excited. "Pew! That were his name for certain. Ah, he looked a shark, he did! If we run down this Black Dog, now, there'll be news for Cap'n Trelawney! Ben's a good runner; few seamen run better than Ben. He should run him down, hand over hand, by the powers! He talked o' keel-hauling, did he? *I'll* keel-haul him!"

All the time he was jerking out these phrases he was stumping up and down the tavern on his crutch, slapping tables with his hand, and giving such a show of excitement as would have convinced an Old Bailey judge or a Bow Street runner. My suspicions had been thoroughly re-awakened on finding Black Dog at the "Spy-glass," and I watched the cook narrowly. But he was too deep, and too ready, and too clever for me, and by the time the two men had come back out of breath, and confessed that they had lost the track in a crowd, and been scolded like thieves, I would have gone bail for the innocence of Long John Silver.

"See here, now, Hawkins," said he, "here's a blessed hard thing on a man like me, now, ain't

it? There's Cap'n Trelawney—what's he to think? Here I have this confounded son of a Dutchman sitting in my own house, drinking of my own rum! Here you comes and tells me of it plain; and here I let him give us all the slip before my blessed dead-lights! Now, Hawkins, you do me justice with the cap'n. You're a lad, you are, but you're as smart as paint. I see that when you first came in. Now, here it is: What could I do, with this old timber I hobble on? When I was an A B master mariner I'd have come up alongside of him, hand over hand, and broached him to in a brace of old shakes, I would; but now——"

And then, all of a sudden, he stopped, and his jaw dropped as though he had remembered something.

"The score!" he burst out. "Three goes o' rum! Why, shiver my timbers, if I hadn't forgotten my score!"

And, falling on a bench, he laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks. I could not help joining; and we laughed together, peal after peal, until the tavern rang again.

"Why, what a precious old sea-calf I am!" he said, at last, wiping his cheeks. "You and me should get on well, Hawkins, for I'll take my davy I should be rated ship's boy. But, come, now, stand by to go about. This won't do. Dooty is dooty, messmates. I'll put on my old cocked hat, and step along of you to Cap'n

Trelawney, and report this here affair. For, mind you, it's serious, young Hawkins; and neither you nor me's come out of it with what I should make so bold as to call credit. Nor you neither, says you; not smart—none of the pair of us smart. But dash my buttons! that was a good 'un about my score."

And he began to laugh again, and that so heartily, that though I did not see the joke as he did, I was again obliged to join him in his mirth.

On our little walk along the quays, he made himself the most interesting companion, telling me about the different ships that we passed by, their rig, tonnage, and nationality, explaining the work that was going forward—how one was discharging, another taking in cargo, and a third making ready for sea; and every now and then telling me some little anecdote of ships or seamen, or repeating a nautical phrase till I had learned it perfectly. I began to see that here was one of the best of possible shipmates.

When we got to the inn, the squire and Dr. Livesey were seated together, finishing a quart of ale with a toast in it, before they should go aboard the schooner on a visit of inspection.

Long John told the story from first to last, with a great deal of spirit and the most perfect truth. "That was how it were, now, weren't it, Hawkins?" he would say, now and again, and I could always bear him entirely out.

The two gentlemen regretted that Black Dog had got away; but we all agreed there was nothing to be done, and after he had been complimented, Long John took up his crutch and departed.

"All hands aboard by four this afternoon," shouted the squire, after him.

"Ay, ay, sir," cried the cook, in the passage.

"Well, squire," said Dr. Livesey, "I don't put much faith in your discoveries, as a general thing; but I will say this, John Silver suits me."

"The man's a perfect trump," declared the squire.

"And now," added the doctor, "Jim may come on board with us, may he not?"

"To be sure he may," says the squire. "Take your hat, Hawkins, and we'll see the ship."

CHAPTER IX

POWDER AND ARMS

THE *Hispaniola* lay some way out, and we went under the figureheads and round the sterns of many other ships, and their cables sometimes grated underneath our keel, and sometimes swung above us. At last, however, we got alongside, and were met and saluted as we stepped aboard by the mate, Mr. Arrow, a brown old sailor, with earrings in his ears and a squint. He and the squire were very thick and friendly, but I soon observed that things were not the same between Mr. Trelawney and the captain.

This last was a sharp-looking man, who seemed angry with everything on board, and was soon to tell us why, for we had hardly got down into the cabin when a sailor followed us.

"Captain Smollett, sir, axing to speak with you," said he.

"I am always at the captain's orders. Show him in," said the squire.

The captain, who was close behind his messen-

ger, entered at once, and shut the door behind him.

"Well, Captain Smollett, what have you to say? All well, I hope; all shipshape and seaworthy?"

"Well, sir," said the captain, "better speak plain, I believe, even at the risk of offence. I don't like this cruise; I don't like the men; and I don't like my officer. That's short and sweet."

"Perhaps, sir, you don't like the ship?" inquired the squire, very angry, as I could see.

"I can't speak as to that, sir, not having seen her tried," said the captain. "She seems a clever craft; more I can't say."

"Possibly, sir, you may not like your employer, either?" says the squire.

But here Dr. Livesey cut in.

"Stay a bit," said he, "stay a bit. No use of such questions as that but to produce ill-feeling. The captain has said too much or he has said too little, and I'm bound to say that I require an explanation of his words. You don't, you say, like this cruise. Now, why?"

"I was engaged, sir, on what we call sealed orders, to sail this ship for that gentleman where he should bid me," said the captain. "So far so good. But now I find that every man before the mast knows more than I do. I don't call that fair, now, do you?"

"No," said Dr. Livesey, "I don't."

"Next," said the captain, "I learn we are

going after treasure—hear it from my own hands, mind you. Now, treasure is ticklish work; I don't like treasure voyages on any account; and I don't like them, above all, when they are secret, and when (begging your pardon, Mr. Trelawney) the secret has been told to the parrot."

"Silver's parrot?" asked the squire.

"It's a way of speaking," said the captain. "Blabbed, I mean. It's my belief neither of you gentlemen know what you are about; but I'll tell you my way of it—life or death, and a close run."

"That is all clear, and, I daresay, true enough," replied Dr. Livesey. "We take the risk; but we are not so ignorant as you believe us. Next, you say you don't like the crew. Are they not good seamen?"

"I don't like them, sir," returned Captain Smollett. "And I think I should have had the choosing of my own hands, if you go to that."

"Perhaps you should," replied the doctor. "My friend should, perhaps, have taken you along with him; but the slight, if there be one, was unintentional. And you don't like Mr. Arrow?"

"I don't, sir. I believe he's a good seaman; but he's too free with the crew to be a good officer. A mate should keep himself to himself —shouldn't drink with the men before the mast!"

"Do you mean he drinks?" cried the squire.

"No, sir," replied the captain; "only that he's too familiar."

"Well, now, and the short and long of it, captain?" asked the doctor. "Tell us what you want."

"Well, gentlemen, are you determined to go on this cruise?"

"Like iron," answered the squire.

"Very good," said the captain. "Then, as you've heard me very patiently, saying things that I could not prove, hear me a few words more. They are putting the powder and the arms in the fore hold. Now, you have a good place under the cabin; why not put them there? —first point. Then you are bringing four of your own people with you, and they tell me some of them are to be berthed forward. Why not give them the berths here beside the cabin?—second point."

"Any more?" asked Mr. Trelawney.

"One more," said the captain. "There's been too much blabbing already."

"Far too much," agreed the doctor.

"I'll tell you what I've heard myself," continued Captain Smollett: "that you have a map of an island; that there's crosses on the map to show where treasure is; and that the island lies——" And then he named the latitude and longitude exactly.

"I never told that," cried the squire, "to a soul!"

"The hands know it, sir," returned the captain.

"Livesey, that must have been you or Hawkins," cried the squire.

"It doesn't much matter who it was," replied the doctor. And I could see that neither he nor the captain paid much regard to Mr. Trelawney's protestations. Neither did I, to be sure, he was so loose a talker; yet in this case I believe he was really right, and that nobody had told the situation of the island.

"Well, gentlemen," continued the captain, "I don't know who has this map; but I make it a point, it shall be kept secret even from me and Mr. Arrow. Otherwise I would ask you to let me resign."

"I see," said the doctor. "You wish us to keep this matter dark, and to make a garrison of the stern part of the ship, manned with my friend's own people, and provided with all the arms and powder on board. In other words, you fear a mutiny."

"Sir," said Captain Smollett, "with no intention to take offence, I deny your right to put words into my mouth. No captain, sir, would be justified in going to sea at all if he had ground enough to say that. As for Mr. Arrow, I believe him thoroughly honest; some of the men are the same; all may be for what I know. But I am responsible for the ship's safety and the life of every man Jack aboard of her. I see things

going, as I think, not quite right. And I ask you to take certain precautions, or let me resign my berth. And that's all."

"Captain Smollett," began the doctor, with a smile, "did ever you hear the fable of the mountain and the mouse? You'll excuse me, I dare say, but you remind me of that fable. When you came in here I'll stake my wig you meant more than this."

"Doctor," said the captain, "you are smart. When I came in here I meant to get discharged. I had no thought that Mr. Trelawney would hear a word."

"No more I would," cried the squire. "Had Livesey not been here I should have seen you to the deuce. As it is, I have heard you. I will do as you desire; but I think the worse of you."

"That's as you please, sir," said the captain. "You'll find I do my duty."

And with that he took his leave.

"Trelawney," said the doctor, "contrary to all my notions, I believe you have managed to get two honest men on board with you—that man and John Silver."

"Silver, if you like," cried the squire; "but as for that intolerable humbug, I declare I think his conduct unmanly, unsailorly, and downright un-English."

"Well," says the doctor, "we shall see."

When we came on deck, the men had begun

already to take out the arms and powder, yo-ho-ing at their work, while the captain and Mr. Arrow stood by superintending.

The new arrangement was quite to my liking. The whole schooner had been overhauled; six berths had been made astern, out of what had been the after-part of the main hold; and this set of cabins was only joined to the galley and forecastle by a sparred passage on the port side. It had been originally meant that the captain, Mr. Arrow, Hunter, Joyce, the doctor, and the squire, were to occupy these six berths. Now, Redruth and I were to get two of them, and Mr. Arrow and the captain were to sleep on deck in the companion, which had been enlarged on each side till you might almost have called it a round-house. Very low it was still, of course; but there was room to swing two hammocks, and even the mate seemed pleased with the arrangement. Even he, perhaps, had been doubtful as to the crew, but that is only guess; for, as you shall hear, we had not long the benefit of his opinion.

We were all hard at work, changing the powder and the berths, when the last man or two, and Long John along with them, came off in a shore-boat.

The cook came up the side like a monkey for cleverness, and, as soon as he saw what was doing, "So ho, mates!" says he, "what's this?"

"We're a-changing of the powder, Jack," answers one.

"Why, by the powers," cried Long John, "if we do, we'll miss the morning tide!"

"My orders!" said the captain shortly. "You may go below, my man. Hands will want supper."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the cook; and, touching his forelock, he disappeared at once in the direction of his galley.

"That's a good man, captain," said the doctor.

"Very likely, sir," replied Captain Smollett. "Easy with that, men—easy," he ran on, to the fellows who were shifting the powder; and then suddenly observing me examining the swivel we carried amidships, a long brass nine—"Here, you ship's boy," he cried, "out o' that! Off with you to the cook and get some work."

And then as I was hurrying off I heard him say, quite loudly, to the doctor:—

"I'll have no favourites on my ship."

I assure you I was quite of the squire's way of thinking, and hated the captain deeply.

CHAPTER X

THE VOYAGE

ALL that night we were in a great bustle getting things stowed in their place, and boatfuls of the squire's friends, Mr. Blandly and the like, coming off to wish him a good voyage and a safe return. We never had a night at the "Admiral Benbow" when I had half the work; and I was dog-tired when, a little before dawn, the boatswain sounded his pipe, and the crew began to man the capstan-bars. I might have been twice as weary, yet I would not have left the deck; all was so new and interesting to me—the brief commands, the shrill note of the whistle, the men bustling to their places in the glimmer of the ship's lanterns.

"Now, Barbecue, tip us a stave," cried one voice.

"The old one," cried another.

"Ay, ay, mates," said Long John, who was standing by, with his crutch under his arm, and at once broke out in the air and words I knew so well—

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest"—

And then the whole crew bore chorus:—

"Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

And at the third "ho!" drove the bars before them with a will.

Even at that exciting moment it carried me back to the old "Admiral Benbow" in a second; and I seemed to hear the voice of the captain piping in the chorus. But soon the anchor was short up; soon it was hanging dripping at the bows; soon the sails began to draw, and the land and shipping to flit by on either side; and before I could lie down to snatch an hour of slumber the *Hispaniola* had begun her voyage to the Isle of Treasure.

I am not going to relate that voyage in detail. It was fairly prosperous. The ship proved to be a good ship, the crew were capable seamen, and the captain thoroughly understood his business. But before we came the length of Treasure Island, two or three things had happened which require to be known.

Mr. Arrow, first of all, turned out even worse than the captain had feared. He had no command among the men, and people did what they pleased with him. But that was by no means the worst of it; for after a day or two at sea he began to appear on deck with hazy eye, red cheeks, stuttering tongue, and other marks of drunkenness. Time after time he was ordered below in disgrace. Sometimes he fell and cut

himself; sometimes he lay all day long in his little bunk at one side of the companion; sometimes for a day or two he would be almost sober and attend to his work at least passably.

In the meantime, we could never make out where he got the drink. That was the ship's mystery. Watch him as we pleased, we could do nothing to solve it; and when we asked him to his face, he would only laugh, if he were drunk, and if he were sober, deny solemnly that he ever tasted anything but water.

He was not only useless as an officer, and a bad influence among the men, but it was plain that at this rate he must soon kill himself outright; so nobody was much surprised, nor very sorry, when one dark night, with a head sea, he disappeared entirely and was seen no more.

"Overboard!" said the captain. "Well, gentlemen, that saves the trouble of putting him in irons."

But there we were, without a mate; and it was necessary, of course, to advance one of the men. The boatswain, Job Anderson, was the likeliest man aboard, and, though he kept his old title, he served in a way as mate. Mr. Trelawney had followed the sea, and his knowledge made him very useful, for he often took a watch himself in easy weather. And the coxswain, Israel Hands, was a careful, wily, old, experienced seaman, who could be trusted at a pinch with almost anything.

He was a great confidant of Long John Silver, and so the mention of his name leads me on to speak of our ship's cook, Barbecue, as the men called him.

Aboard ship he carried his crutch by a lanyard round his neck, to have both hands as free as possible. It was something to see him wedge the foot of the crutch against a bulkhead, and, propped against it, yielding to every movement of the ship, get on with his cooking like some one safe ashore. Still more strange was it to see him in the heaviest of weather cross the deck. He had a line or two rigged up to help him across the widest spaces—Long John's earrings, they were called; and he would hand himself from one place to another, now using the crutch, now trailing it alongside by the lanyard, as quickly as another man could walk. Yet some of the men who had sailed with him before expressed their pity to see him so reduced.

"He's no common man, Barbecue," said the coxswain to me. "He had good schooling in his young days, and can speak like a book when so minded; and brave—a lion's nothing alongside of Long John! I seen him grapple four and knock their heads together—him unarmed."

All the crew respected and even obeyed him. He had a way of talking to each, and doing everybody some particular service. To me he was unweariedly kind; and always glad to see me in the galley, which he kept as clean as a new pin;

the dishes hanging up burnished, and his parrot in a cage in one corner.

"Come away, Hawkins," he would say; "come and have a yarn with John. Nobody more welcome than yourself, my son. Sit you down and hear the news. Here's Cap'n Flint—I calls my parrot Cap'n Flint, after the famous buccaneer—here's Cap'n Flint predicting success to our v'yage. Wasn't you, cap'n?"

And the parrot would say, with great rapidity, "Pieces of eight! pieces of eight! pieces of eight!" till you wondered that it was not out of breath, or till John threw his handkerchief over the cage.

"Now, that bird," he would say, "is, may be, two hundred years old, Hawkins—they lives for ever mostly; and if anybody's seen more wickedness, it must be the devil himself. She's sailed with England, the great Cap'n England, the pirate. She's been at Madagascar, and at Malabar, and Surinam, and Providence, and Portobello. She was at the fishing up of the wrecked plate ships. It's there she learned 'Pieces of eight,' and little wonder; three hundred and fifty thousand of 'em, Hawkins! She was at the boarding of the Viceroy of the Indies out of Goa, she was; and to look at her you would think she was a babby. But you smelt powder —didn't you, cap'n?"

"Stand by to go about," the parrot would scream.

"Ah, she's a handsome craft, she is," the cook

would say, and give her sugar from his pocket, and then the bird would peck at the bars and swear straight on, passing belief for wickedness. "There," John would add, "you can't touch pitch and not be mucked, lad. Here's this poor old innocent bird o' mine swearing blue fire, and none the wiser, you may lay to that. She would swear the same, in a manner of speaking, before chaplain." And John would touch his forelock with a solemn way he had, that made me think he was the best of men.

In the meantime, the squire and Captain Smollett were still on pretty distant terms with one another. The squire made no bones about the matter; he despised the captain. The captain, on his part, never spoke but when he was spoken to, and then sharp and short and dry, and not a word wasted. He owned, when driven into a corner, that he seemed to have been wrong about the crew, that some of them were as brisk as he wanted to see, and all had behaved fairly well. As for the ship, he had taken a downright fancy to her. "She'll lie a point nearer the wind than a man has a right to expect of his own married wife, sir. But," he would add, "all I say is we're not home again, and I don't like the cruise."

The squire, at this, would turn away and march up and down the deck, chin in air.

"A trifle more of that man," he would say, "and I should explode."

We had some heavy weather, which only proved the qualities of the *Hispaniola*. Every man on board seemed well content, and they must have been hard to please if they had been otherwise; for it is my belief there was never a ship's company so spoiled since Noah put to sea. Double grog was going on the least excuse; there was duff on odd days, as, for instance, if the squire heard it was any man's birthday; and always a barrel of apples standing broached in the waist, for any one to help himself that had a fancy.

"Never knew good come of it yet," the captain said to Dr. Livesey. "Spoil foc's'le hands, make devils. That's my belief."

But good did come of the apple barrel, as you shall hear; for if it had not been for that, we should have had no note of warning, and might all have perished by the hand of treachery.

This was how it came about.

We had run up the trades to get the wind of the island we were after—I am not allowed to be more plain—and now we were running down for it with a bright look-out day and night. It was about the last day of our outward voyage, by the largest computation; some time that night, or, at latest, before noon of the morrow, we should sight the Treasure Island. We were heading S. S. W., and had a steady breeze abeam and a quiet sea. The *Hispaniola* rolled steadily, dipping her bowsprit now and then with a whiff of

spray. All was drawing alow and aloft; every one was in the bravest spirits, because we were now so near an end of the first part of our adventure.

Now, just after sundown, when all my work was over, and I was on my way to my berth, it occurred to me that I should like an apple. I ran on deck. The watch was all forward looking out for the island. The man at the helm was watching the luff of the sail, and whistling away gently to himself; and that was the only sound excepting the swish of the sea against the bows and around the sides of the ship.

In I got bodily into the apple barrel, and found there was scarce an apple left; but, sitting down there in the dark, what with the sound of the waters and the rocking movement of the ship, I had either fallen asleep, or was on the point of doing so, when a heavy man sat down with rather a clash close by. The barrel shook as he leaned his shoulders against it, and I was just about to jump up when the man began to speak. It was Silver's voice, and, before I had heard a dozen words, I would not have shown myself for all the world, but lay there, trembling and listening, in the extreme of fear and curiosity; for from these dozen words I understood that the lives of all the honest men aboard depended upon me alone.

CHAPTER XI

WHAT I HEARD IN THE APPLE BARREL

"NO, not I," said Silver. "Flint was cap'n; I was quartermaster, along of my timber leg. The same broadside I lost my leg, old Pew lost his dead-lights. It was a master surgeon, him that ampytated me—out of college and all—Latin by the bucket, and what not; but he was hanged like a dog, and sun-dried like the rest, at Corso Castle. That was Roberts' men, that was, and comed of changing names to their ships—*Royal Fortune* and so on. Now, what a ship was christened, so let her stay, I says. So it was with the *Cassandra*, as brought us all safe home from Malabar, after England took the Viceroy of the Indies; so it was with the old *Walrus*, Flint's old ship, as I've seen a-muck with the red blood and fit to sink with gold."

"Ah!" cried another voice, that of the youngest hand on board, and evidently full of admiration, "he was the flower of the flock, was Flint!"

"Davis was a man, too, by all accounts,"

said Silver. "I never sailed along of him; first with England, then with Flint, that's my story; and now here on my own account, in a manner of speaking. I laid by nine hundred safe, from England, and two thousand after Flint. That ain't bad for a man before the mast —all safe in bank. 'Tain't earning now, it's saving does it, you may lay to that. Where's all England's men now? I dunno. Where's Flint's? Why, most on 'em aboard here, and glad to get the duff—been begging before that, some on 'em. Old Pew, as had lost his sight, and might have thought shame, spends twelve hundred pound in a year, like a lord in Parliament. Where is he now? Well, he's dead now and under hatches; but for two years before that, shiver my timbers! the man was starving. He begged, and he stole, and he cut throats, and starved at that, by the powers!"

"Well, it ain't much use, after all," said the young seaman.

"'Tain't much use for fools, you may lay to it—that, nor nothing," cried Silver. "But now, you look here: you're young, you are, but you're as smart as paint. I see that when I set my eyes on you, and I'll talk to you like a man."

You may imagine how I felt when I heard this abominable old rogue addressing another in the very same words of flattery as he had used to myself. I think, if I had been able, that I

would have killed him through the barrel. Meantime, he ran on, little supposing he was overheard.

"Here it is about gentlemen of fortune. They lives rough, and they risk swinging, but they eat and drink like fighting-cocks, and when a cruise is done, why, it's hundreds of pounds instead of hundreds of farthings in their pockets. Now, the most goes for rum and a good fling, and to sea again in their shirts. But that's not the course I lay. I puts it all away, some here, some there, and none too much anywheres by reason of suspicion. I'm fifty, mark you; once back from this cruise, I set up gentleman in earnest. Time enough, too, says you. Ah, but I've lived easy in the meantime; never denied myself o' nothing heart desires, and slep' soft and ate dainty all my days, but when at sea. And how did I begin? Before the mast, like you!"

"Well," said the other, "but all the other money's gone now, ain't it? You daren't show face in Bristol after this."

"Why, where might you suppose it was?" asked Silver, derisively.

"At Bristol, in banks and places," answered his companion.

"It were," said the cook; "it were when we weighed anchor. But my old missis has it all by now. And the 'Spy-glass' is sold, lease and goodwill and rigging; and the old girl's off to

meet me. I would tell you where, for I trust you; but it 'u'd make jealousy among the mates."

"And can you trust your missis?" asked the other.

"Gentlemen of fortune," returned the cook, "usually trusts little among themselves, and right they are, you may lay to it. But I have a way with me, I have. When a mate brings a slip on his cable—one as knows me, I mean—it won't be in the same world with old John. There was some that was feared of Pew, and some that was feared of Flint; but Flint his own self was feared of me. Feared he was, and proud. They was the roughest crew afloat, was Flint's; the devil himself would have been feared to go to sea with them. Well, now, I tell you, I'm not a boasting man, and you seen yourself how easy I keep company; but when I was quartermaster, *lambs* wasn't the word for Flint's old buccaneers. Ah, you may be sure of yourself in old John's ship."

"Well, I tell you now," replied the lad, "I didn't half a quarter like the job till I had this talk with you, John; but there's my hand on it now."

"And a brave lad you were, and smart, too," answered Silver, shaking hands so heartily that all the barrel shook, "and a finer figurehead for a gentleman of fortune I never clapped my eyes on."

By this time I had begun to understand the meaning of their terms. By a "gentleman of fortune" they plainly meant neither more nor less than a common pirate, and the little scene that I had overheard was the last act in the corruption of one of the honest hands—perhaps of the last one left aboard. But on this point I was soon to be relieved, for Silver giving a little whistle, a third man strolled up and sat down by the party.

"Dick's square," said Silver.

"Oh, I know'd Dick was square," returned the voice of the coxswain, Israel Hands. "He's no fool, is Dick." And he turned his quid and spat. "But, look here," he went on, "here's what I want to know, Barbecue: how long are we a-going to stand off and on like a blessed bumboat? I've had a'most enough o' Cap'n Smollett; he's hazed me long enough, by thunder! I want to go into that cabin, I do. I want their pickles and wines, and that."

"Israel," said Silver, "your head ain't much account, nor ever was. But you're able to hear, I reckon; leastways, your ears is big enough. Now, here's what I say: you'll berth forward, and you'll live hard, and you'll speak soft, and you'll keep sober, till I give the word; and you may lay to that, my son."

"Well, I don't say no, do I?" growled the coxswain. "What I say is, when? That's what I say."

"When! by the powers!" cried Silver. "Well, now, if you want to know, I'll tell you when. The last moment I can manage; and that's when. Here's a first-rate seaman, Cap'n Smollett, sails the blessed ship for us. Here's this squire and doctor with a map and such—I don't know where it is, do I? No more do you, says you. Well, then, I mean this squire and doctor shall find the stuff, and help us to get it aboard, by the powers! Then we'll see. If I was sure of you all, sons of double Dutchmen, I'd have Cap'n Smollett navigate us half-way back again before I struck."

"Why, we're all seamen aboard here, I should think," said the lad Dick.

"We're all foc's'le hands, you mean," snapped Silver. "We can steer a course, but who's to set one? That's what all you gentlemen split on, first and last. If I had my way, I'd have Cap'n Smollett work us back into the trades at least; then we'd have no blessed miscalculations and a spoonful of water a day. But I know the sort you are. I'll finish with 'em at the island, as soon's the blunt's on board, and a pity it is. But you're never happy till you're drunk. Split my sides, I've a sick heart to sail with the likes of you!"

"Easy all, Long John," cried Israel. "Who's a-crossin' of you?"

"Why, how many tall ships, think ye, now, have I seen laid aboard? and how many brisk

lads drying in the sun at Execution Dock?" cried Silver, "and all for this same hurry and hurry and hurry. You hear me? I seen a thing or two at sea, I have. If you would on'y lay your course, and a p'int to windward, you would ride in carriages, you would. But not you! I know you. You'll have your mouthful of rum to-morrow, and go hang."

"Everybody know'd you was a kind of a chapling, John; but there's others as could hand and steer as well as you," said Israel. "They liked a bit o' fun, they did. They wasn't so high and dry, nohow, but took their fling, like jolly companions every one."

"So?" says Silver. "Well, and where are they now? Pew was that sort, and he died a beggar-man. Flint was, and he died of rum at Savannah. Ah, they was a sweet crew, they was! on'y, where are they?"

"But," asked Dick, "when we do lay 'em athwart, what are we to do with 'em, anyhow?"

"There's the man for me!" cried the cook, admiringly. "That's what I call business. Well, what would you think? Put 'em ashore like maroons? That would have been England's way. Or cut 'em down like that much pork? That would have been Flint's or Billy Bones's."

"Billy was the man for that," said Israel. "'Dead men don't bite,' says he. Well, he's dead now hisself; he knows the long and short

on it now; and if ever a rough hand come to port, it was Billy."

"Right you are," said Silver, "rough and ready. But mark you here: I'm an easy man—I'm quite the gentleman, says you; but this time it's serious. Dooty is dooty, mates. I give my vote—death. When I'm in Parlyment, and riding in my coach, I don't want none of these sea-lawyers in the cabin a-coming home, unlooked for, like the devil at prayers. Wait is what I say; but when the time comes, why let her rip!"

"John," cries the coxswain, "you're a man!"

"You'll say so, Israel, when you see," said Silver. "Only one thing I claim—I claim Trelawney. I'll wring his calf's head off his body with these hands. Dick!" he added, breaking off, "you just jump up, like a sweet lad, and get me an apple, to wet my pipe like."

You may fancy the terror I was in! I should have leaped out and run for it, if I had found the strength; but my limbs and heart alike misgave me. I heard Dick begin to rise, and then some one seemingly stopped him, and the voice of Hands exclaimed:—

"Oh, stow that! Don't you get sucking of that bilge, John. Let's have a go of the rum."

"Dick," said Silver, "I trust you. I've a gauge on the keg, mind. There's the key; you fill a pannikin and bring it up."

Terrified as I was, I could not help thinking

to myself that this must have been how Mr. Arrow got the strong waters that destroyed him.

Dick was gone but a little while, and during his absence Israel spoke straight on in the cook's ear. It was but a word or two that I could catch, and yet I gathered some important news; for, besides other scraps that tended to the same purpose, this whole clause was audible: "Not another man of them'll jine." Hence there were still faithful men on board.

When Dick returned, one after another of the trio took the pannikin and drank—one "To luck;" another with a "Here's to old Flint;" and Silver himself saying, in a kind of song, "Here's to ourselves, and hold your luff, plenty of prizes and plenty of duff."

Just then a sort of brightness fell upon me in the barrel, and, looking up, I found the moon had risen, and was silvering the mizzen-top and shining white on the luff of the fore-sail; and almost at the same time the voice of the look-out shouted, "Land ho!"

CHAPTER XII

COUNCIL OF WAR

THERE was a great rush of feet across the deck. I could hear people tumbling up from the cabin and the foc's'le; and, slipping in an instant outside my barrel, I dived behind the foresail, made a double towards the stern, and came out upon the open deck in time to join Hunter and Dr. Livesey in the rush for the weather bow.

There all hands were already congregated. A belt of fog had lifted almost simultaneously with the appearance of the moon. Away to the south-west of us we saw two low hills, about a couple of miles apart, and rising behind one of them a third and higher hill, whose peak was still buried in the fog. All three seemed sharp and conical in figure.

So much I saw, almost in a dream, for I had not yet recovered from my horrid fear of a minute or two before. And then I heard the voice of Captain Smollett issuing orders. The *Hispaniola* was laid a couple of points nearer the wind, and now sailed a course that would just clear the island on the east.

"And now, men," said the captain, when all was sheeted home, "has any one of you ever seen that land ahead?"

"I have, sir," said Silver. "I've watered there with a trader I was cook in."

"The anchorage is on the south, behind an islet, I fancy?" asked the captain.

"Yes, sir; Skeleton Island they calls it. It were a main place for pirates once, and a hand we had on board knowed all their names for it. That hill to the nor'ard they calls the Fore-mast Hill; there are three hills in a row running south-'ard—fore, main, and mizzen, sir. But the main—that's the big 'un, with the cloud on it—they usually calls the Spy-glass, by reason of a look-out they kept when they was in the anchorage cleaning; for it's there they cleaned their ships, sir, asking your pardon."

"I have a chart here," says Captain Smollett. "See if that's the place."

Long John's eyes burned in his head as he took the chart, but, by the fresh look of the paper, I knew he was doomed to disappointment. This was not the map we found in Billy Bones's chest, but an accurate copy, complete in all things—names and heights and soundings—with the single exception of the red crosses and the written notes. Sharp as must have been his annoyance, Silver had the strength of mind to hide it.

"Yes, sir," said he, "this is the spot, to be sure;

and very prettily drawed out. Who might have done that, I wonder? The pirates were too ignorant, I reckon. Ay, here it is: 'Capt. Kidd's Anchorage'—just the name my shipmate called it. There's a strong current runs along the south, and then away nor'ard up the west coast. Right you was, sir," says he, "to haul your wind and keep the weather of the island. Leastways, if such was your intention as to enter and careen, and there ain't no better place for that in these waters."

"Thank you, my man," says Captain Smollett. "I'll ask you, later on, to give us a help. You may go."

I was surprised at the coolness with which John avowed his knowledge of the island; and I own I was half-frightened when I saw him drawing nearer to myself. He did not know, to be sure, that I had overheard his council from the apple barrel, and yet I had, by this time, taken such a horror of his cruelty, duplicity, and power, that I could scarce conceal a shudder when he laid his hand upon my arm.

"Ah," says he, "this here is a sweet spot, this island—a sweet spot for a lad to get ashore on. You'll bathe, and you'll climb trees, and you'll hunt goats, you will; and you'll get aloft on them hills like a goat yourself. Why, it makes me young again. I was going to forget my timber leg, I was. It's a pleasant thing to be young, and have ten toes, and you may lay to that.

When you want to go a bit of exploring, you just ask old John, and he'll put up a snack for you to take along."

And clapping me in the friendliest way upon the shoulder, he hobbled off forward, and went below.

Captain Smollett, the squire, and Dr. Livesey were talking together on the quarter-deck, and, anxious as I was to tell them my story, I durst not interrupt them openly. While I was still casting about in my thoughts to find some probable excuse, Dr. Livesey called me to his side. He had left his pipe below, and being a slave to tobacco, had meant that I should fetch it; but as soon as I was near enough to speak and not to be overheard, I broke out immediately:—"Doctor, let me speak. Get the captain and squire down to the cabin, and then make some pretence to send for me. I have terrible news."

The doctor changed countenance a little, but next moment he was master of himself.

"Thank you, Jim," said he, quite loudly, "that was all I wanted to know," as if he had asked me a question.

And with that he turned on his heel and rejoined the other two. They spoke together for a little, and though none of them started, or raised his voice, or so much as whistled, it was plain enough that Dr. Livesey had communicated my request; for the next thing that

I heard was the captain giving an order to Job Anderson, and all hands were piped on deck.

"My lads," said Captain Smollett, "I've a word to say to you. This land that we have sighted is the place we have been sailing for. Mr. Trelawney, being a very open-handed gentleman, as we all know, has just asked me a word or two, and as I was able to tell him that every man on board had done his duty, alow and aloft, as I never ask to see it done better, why, he and I and the doctor are going below to the cabin to drink *your* health and luck, and you'll have grog served out for you to drink *our* health and luck. I'll tell you what I think of this: I think it handsome. And if you think as I do, you'll give a good sea cheer for the gentleman that does it."

The cheer followed—that was a matter of course; but it rang out so full and hearty, that I confess I could hardly believe these same men were plotting for our blood.

"One more cheer for Cap'n Smollett," cried Long John, when the first had subsided.

And this also was given with a will.

On the top of that the three gentlemen went below, and not long after, word was sent forward that Jim Hawkins was wanted in the cabin.

I found them all three seated round the table, a bottle of Spanish wine and some raisins before them, and the doctor smoking away, with his

wig on his lap, and that, I knew, was a sign that he was agitated. The stern window was open, for it was a warm night, and you could see the moon shining behind on the ship's wake.

"Now, Hawkins," said the squire, "you have something to say. Speak up."

I did as I was bid, and as short as I could make it, told the whole details of Silver's conversation. Nobody interrupted me till I was done, nor did any one of the three of them make so much as a movement, but they kept their eyes upon my face from first to last.

"Jim," said Dr. Livesey, "take a seat."

And they made me sit down at table beside them, poured me out a glass of wine, filled my hands with raisins, and all three, one after the other, and each with a bow, drank my good health, and their service to me, for my luck and courage.

"Now, captain," said the squire, "you were right and I was wrong. I own myself an ass, and I await your orders."

"No more an ass than I, sir," returned the captain. "I never heard of a crew that meant to mutiny but what showed signs before, for any man that had an eye in his head to see the mischief and take steps according. But this crew," he added, "beats me."

"Captain," said the doctor, "with your permission, that's Silver. A very remarkable man."

"He'd look remarkably well from a yard-

arm, sir," returned the captain. "But this is talk; this don't lead to anything. I see three or four points, and with Mr. Trelawney's permission, I'll name them."

"You, sir, are the captain. It is for you to speak," says Mr. Trelawney, grandly.

"First point," began Mr. Smollett. "We must go on, because we can't turn back. If I gave the word to go about, they would rise at once. Second point, we have time before us—at least, until this treasure's found. Third point, there are faithful hands. Now, sir, it's got to come to blows sooner or later; and what I propose is, to take time by the forelock, as the saying is, and come to blows some fine day when they least expect it. We can count, I take it, on your own home servants, Mr. Trelawney?"

"As upon myself," declared the squire.

"Three," reckoned the captain, "ourselves make seven, counting Hawkins, here. Now, about the honest hands?"

"Most likely Trelawney's own men," said the doctor; "those he had picked up for himself, before he lit on Silver."

"Nay," replied the squire, "Hands was one of mine."

"I did think I could have trusted Hands," added the captain.

"And to think that they're all Englishmen!" broke out the squire. "Sir, I could find it in my heart to blow the ship up."

"Well, gentlemen," said the captain, "the best that I can say is not much. We must lay-to, if you please, and keep a bright look-out. It's trying on a man, I know. It would be pleasanter to come to blows. But there's no help for it till we know our men. Lay-to, and whistle for a wind, that's my view."

"Jim here," said the doctor, "can help us more than any one. The men are not shy with him, and Jim is a noticing lad."

"Hawkins, I put prodigious faith in you," added the squire.

I began to feel pretty desperate at this, for I felt altogether helpless; and yet, by an odd train of circumstances, it was indeed through me that safety came. In the meantime, talk as we pleased, there were only seven out of the twenty-six on whom we knew we could rely; and out of these seven one was a boy, so that the grown men on our side were six to their nineteen.

PART III

MY SHORE ADVENTURE

CHAPTER XIII

HOW MY SHORE ADVENTURE BEGAN

THE appearance of the island when I came on deck next morning was altogether changed. Although the breeze had now utterly ceased, we had made a great deal of way during the night, and were now lying becalmed about half a mile to the south-east of the low eastern coast. Grey-coloured woods covered a large part of the surface. This even tint was indeed broken up by streaks of yellow sandbreak in the lower lands, and by many tall trees of the pine family, out-topping the others—some singly, some in clumps; but the general colouring was uniform and sad. The hills ran up clear above the vegetation in spires of naked rock. All were strangely shaped, and the Spy-glass, which was by three or four hundred feet the tallest on the island, was likewise the strangest in configuration, running up sheer from almost every side, and then suddenly cut off at the top like a pedestal to put a statue on.

The *Hispaniola* was rolling scuppers under in the ocean swell. The booms were tearing

at the blocks, the rudder was banging to and fro, and the whole ship creaking, groaning, and jumping like a manufactory. I had to cling tight to the backstay, and the world turned giddily before my eyes; for though I was a good enough sailor when there was way on, this standing still and being rolled about like a bottle was a thing I never learned to stand without a qualm or so, above all in the morning, on an empty stomach.

Perhaps it was this—perhaps it was the look of the island, with its grey, melancholy woods, and wild stone spires, and the surf that we could both see and hear foaming and thundering on the steep beach—at least, although the sun shone bright and hot, and the shore birds were fishing and crying all around us, and you would have thought any one would have been glad to get to land after being so long at sea, my heart sank, as the saying is, into my boots; and from that first look onward, I hated the very thought of Treasure Island.

We had a dreary morning's work before us, for there was no sign of any wind, and the boats had to be got out and manned, and the ship warped three or four miles round the corner of the island, and up the narrow passage to the haven behind Skeleton Island. I volunteered for one of the boats, where I had, of course, no business. The heat was sweltering, and the men grumbled fiercely over their work. Ander-

son was in command of my boat, and instead of keeping the crew in order, he grumbled as loud as the worst.

"Well," he said, with an oath, "it's not for ever."

I thought this was a very bad sign; for, up to that day, the men had gone briskly and willingly about their business; but the very sight of the island had relaxed the cords of discipline.

All the way in, Long John stood by the steersman and conned the ship. He knew the passage like the palm of his hand; and though the man in the chains got everywhere more water than was down in the chart, John never hesitated once.

"There's a strong scour with the ebb," he said, "and this here passage has been dug out, in a manner of speaking, with a spade."

We brought up just where the anchor was in the chart, about a third of a mile from each shore, the mainland on one side, and Skeleton Island on the other. The bottom was clean sand. The plunge of our anchor sent up clouds of birds wheeling and crying over the woods; but in less than a minute they were down again, and all was once more silent.

The place was entirely land-locked, buried in woods, the trees coming right down to high-water mark, the shores mostly flat, and the hill-tops standing round at a distance in a sort of amphitheatre, one here, one there. Two little

rivers, or, rather, two swamps, emptied out into this pond, as you might call it; and the foliage round that part of the shore had a kind of poisonous brightness. From the ship, we could see nothing of the house or stockade, for they were quite buried among trees; and if it had not been for the chart on the companion, we might have been the first that had ever anchored there since the island arose out of the seas.

There was not a breath of air moving, nor a sound but that of the surf booming half a mile along the beaches and against the rocks outside. A peculiar stagnant smell hung over the anchorage—a smell of sodden leaves and rotting tree trunks. I observed the doctor sniffing and sniffing, like some one tasting a bad egg.

"I don't know about treasure," he said, "but I'll stake my wig there's fever here."

If the conduct of the men had been alarming in the boat, it became truly threatening when they had come aboard. They lay about the deck growling together in talk. The slightest order was received with a black look, and grudgingly and carelessly obeyed. Even the honest hands must have caught the infection, for there was not one man aboard to mend another. Mutiny, it was plain, hung over us like a thundercloud.

And it was not only we of the cabin party who perceived the danger. Long John was hard at work going from group to group, spend-

ing himself in good advice, and as for example no man could have shown a better. He fairly outstripped himself in willingness and civility; he was all smiles to every one. If an order were given, John would be on his crutch in an instant, with the cheeriest "Ay, ay, sir!" in the world; and when there was nothing else to do, he kept up one song after another, as if to conceal the discontent of the rest.

Of all the gloomy features of that gloomy afternoon, this obvious anxiety on the part of Long John appeared the worst.

We held a council in the cabin.

"Sir," said the captain, "if I risk another order, the whole ship 'll come about our ears by the run. You see, sir, here it is. I get a rough answer, do I not? Well, if I speak back, pikes will be going in two shakes; if I don't, Silver will see there's something under that, and the game's up. Now, we've only one man to rely on."

"And who is that?" asked the squire.

"Silver, sir," returned the captain; "he's as anxious as you and I to smother things up. This is a tiff; he'd soon talk 'em out of it if he had the chance, and what I propose to do is to give him the chance. Let's allow the man an afternoon ashore. If they all go, why, we'll fight the ship. If they none of them go, well, then we hold the cabin, and God defend the right. If some go, you mark my words, sir, Silver 'll bring 'em aboard again as mild as lambs."

It was so decided; loaded pistols were served out to all the sure men; Hunter, Joyce, and Redruth were taken into our confidence, and received the news with less surprise and a better spirit than we had looked for, and then the captain went on deck and addressed the crew.

"My lads," said he, "we've had a hot day, and are all tired and out of sorts. A turn ashore'll hurt nobody—the boats are still in the water; you can take the gigs, and as many as please may go ashore for the afternoon. I'll fire a gun half an hour before sundown."

I believe the silly fellows must have thought they would break their shins over treasure as soon as they were landed; for they all came out of their sulks in a moment, and gave a cheer that started the echo in a far-away hill, and sent the birds once more flying and squalling round the anchorage.

The captain was too bright to be in the way. He whipped out of sight in a moment, leaving Silver to arrange the party; and I fancy it was as well he did so. Had he been on deck, he could no longer so much as have pretended not to understand the situation. It was as plain as day. Silver was the captain, and a mighty rebellious crew he had of it. The honest hands —and I was soon to see it proved that there were such on board—must have been very stupid fellows. Or, rather, I suppose the truth was this, that all hands were disaffected by the

example of the ringleaders—only some more, some less; and a few, being good fellows in the main, could neither be led nor driven any further. It is one thing to be idle and skulk, and quite another to take a ship and murder a number of innocent men.

At last, however, the party was made up. Six fellows were to stay on board, and the remaining thirteen, including Silver, began to embark.

Then it was that there came into my head the first of the mad notions that contributed so much to save our lives. If six men were left by Silver, it was plain our party could not take and fight the ship; and since only six were left, it was equally plain that the cabin party had no present need of my assistance. It occurred to me at once to go ashore. In a jiffy I had slipped over the side, and curled up in the fore-sheets of the nearest boat, and almost at the same moment she shoved off.

No one took notice of me, only the bow oar saying, "Is that you, Jim? Keep your head down." But Silver, from the other boat, looked sharply over and called out to know if that were me; and from that moment I began to regret what I had done.

The crews raced for the beach; but the boat I was in, having some start, and being at once the lighter and the better manned, shot far ahead of her consort, and the bow had struck

among the shore-side trees, and I had caught a branch and swung myself out, and plunged into the nearest thicket, while Silver and the rest were still a hundred yards behind.

"Jim, Jim!" I heard him shouting.

But you may suppose I paid no heed; jumping, ducking, and breaking through, I ran straight before my nose, till I could run no longer.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FIRST BLOW

I WAS so pleased at having given the slip to Long John, that I began to enjoy myself and look around me with some interest on the strange land that I was in.

I had crossed a marshy tract full of willows, bulrushes, and odd, outlandish, swampy trees; and I had now come out upon the skirts of an open piece of undulating, sandy country, about a mile long, dotted with a few pines, and a great number of contorted trees, not unlike the oak in growth, but pale in the foliage, like willows. On the far side of the open stood one of the hills, with two quaint, craggy peaks, shining vividly in the sun.

I now felt for the first time the joy of exploration. The isle was uninhabited; my shipmates I had left behind, and nothing lived in front of me but dumb brutes and fowls. I turned hither and thither among the trees. Here and there were flowering plants, unknown to me; here and there I saw snakes, and one raised his head from a ledge of rock and hissed at me with a noise

not unlike the spinning of a top. Little did I suppose that he was a deadly enemy, and that the noise was the famous rattle.

Then I came to a long thicket of these oak-like trees—live, or evergreen, oaks, I heard afterwards they should be called—which grew low along the sand like brambles, the boughs curiously twisted, the foliage compact, like thatch. The thicket stretched down from the top of one of the sandy knolls, spreading and growing taller as it went, until it reached the margin of the broad, reedy fen, through which the nearest of the little rivers soaked its way into the anchorage. The marsh was steaming in the strong sun, and the outline of the Spy-glass trembled through the haze.

All at once there began to go a sort of bustle among the bulrushes; a wild duck flew up with a quack, another followed, and soon over the whole surface of the marsh a great cloud of birds hung screaming and circling in the air. I judged at once that some of my shipmates must be drawing near along the borders of the fen. Nor was I deceived; for soon I heard the very distant and low tones of a human voice, which, as I continued to give ear, grew steadily louder and nearer.

This put me in a great fear, and I crawled under cover of the nearest live-oak, and squatted there, hearkening, as silent as a mouse.

Another voice answered; and then the first

voice, which I now recognised to be Silver's, once more took up the story, and ran on for a long while in a stream, only now and again interrupted by the other. By the sound they must have been talking earnestly, and almost fiercely; but no distinct word came to my hearing.

At last the speakers seemed to have paused, and perhaps to have sat down; for not only did they cease to draw any nearer, but the birds themselves began to grow more quiet, and to settle again to their places in the swamp.

And now I began to feel that I was neglecting my business; that since I had been so foolhardy as to come ashore with these desperadoes, the least I could do was to overhear them at their councils; and that my plain and obvious duty was to draw as close as I could manage, under the favourable ambush of the crouching trees.

I could tell the direction of the speakers pretty exactly, not only by the sound of their voices, but by the behaviour of the few birds that still hung in alarm above the heads of the intruders.

Crawling on all-fours, I made steadily but slowly towards them; till at last, raising my head to an aperture among the leaves, I could see clear down into a little green dell beside the marsh, and closely set about with trees, where Long John Silver and another of the crew stood face to face in conversation.

The sun beat full upon them. Silver had thrown his hat beside him on the ground, and

his great, smooth, blond face, all shining with heat, was lifted to the other man's in a kind of appeal.

"Mate," he was saying, "it's because I thinks gold dust of you—gold dust, and you may lay to that! If I hadn't took to you like pitch, do you think I'd have been here a-warning of you? All's up—you can't make nor mend; it's to save your neck that I'm a-speaking, and if one of the wild 'uns knew it, where 'ud I be, Tom—now, tell me, where 'ud I be?"

"Silver," said the other man—and I observed he was not only red in the face, but spoke as hoarse as a crow, and his voice shook, too, like a taut rope—"Silver," says he, "you're old, and you're honest, or has the name for it; and you've money, too, which lots of poor sailors hasn't and you're brave, or I'm mistook. And will you tell me you'll let yourself be led away with that kind of a mess of swabs? not you! As sure as God sees me, I'd sooner lose my hand. If I turn agin my dooty——"

And then all of a sudden he was interrupted by a noise. I had found one of the honest hands—well, here, at that same moment, came news of another. Far away out in the marsh there arose, all of a sudden, a sound like the cry of anger, then another on the back of it; and then one horrid, long-drawn scream. The rocks of the Spy-glass re-echoed it a score of times; the whole troop of marsh-birds rose again,

darkening heaven, with a simultaneous whirr; and long after that death yell was still ringing in my brain, silence had re-established its empire, and only the rustle of the redescending birds and the boom of the distant surges disturbed the languor of the afternoon.

Tom had leaped at the sound, like a horse at the spur; but Silver had not winked an eye. He stood where he was, resting lightly on his crutch, watching his companion like a snake about to spring.

"John!" said the sailor, stretching out his hand.

"Hands off!" cried Silver, leaping back a yard, as it seemed to me, with the speed and security of a trained gymnast.

"Hands off, if you like, John Silver," said the other. "It's a black conscience that can make you feared of me. But, in heaven's name, tell me what was that?"

"That?" returned Silver, smiling away, but warier than ever, his eye a mere pin-point in his big face, but gleaming like a crumb of glass. "That? Oh, I reckon that'll be Alan."

And at this poor Tom flashed out like a hero.

"Alan!" he cried. "Then rest his soul for a true seaman! And as for you, John Silver, long you've been a mate of mine, but you're mate of mine no more. If I die like a dog, I'll die in my dooty. You've killed Alan, have you? Kill me, too, if you can. But I defies you."

And with that, this brave fellow turned his back directly on the cook, and set off walking for the beach. But he was not destined to go far. With a cry, John seized the branch of a tree, whipped the crutch out of his armpit, and sent that uncouth missile hurtling through the air. It struck poor Tom, point foremost and with stunning violence, right between the shoulders in the middle of his back. His hands flew up, he gave a sort of gasp, and fell.

Whether he were injured much or little, none could ever tell. Like enough, to judge from the sound, his back was broken on the spot. But he had no time given him to recover. Silver, agile as a monkey, even without leg or crutch, was on the top of him next moment, and had twice buried his knife up to the hilt in that defenceless body. From my place of ambush, I could hear him pant aloud as he struck the blows.

I do not know what it rightly is to faint, but I do know that for the next little while the whole world swam away from before me in a whirling mist; Silver and the birds, and the tall Spy-glass hilltop, going round and round and topsy-turvy before my eyes, and all manner of bells ringing and distant voices shouting in my ear.

When I came to myself, the monster had pulled himself together, his crutch under his arm, his hat upon his head. Just before him Tom lay motionless upon the sward; but the murderer minded him not a whit, cleansing his

blood-stained knife the while upon a wisp of grass. Everything else was unchanged, the sun still shining mercilessly on the streaming marsh and the tall pinnacle of the mountain, and I could scarce persuade myself that murder had been actually done, and a human life cruelly cut short a moment since, before my eyes.

But now John put his hand into his pocket, brought out a whistle, and blew upon it several modulated blasts, that rang far across the heated air. I could not tell, of course, the meaning of the signal; but it instantly awoke my fears. More men would be coming. I might be discovered. They had already slain two of the honest people; after Tom and Alan, might not I come next?

Instantly I began to extricate myself and crawl back again, with what speed and silence I could manage, to the more open portion of the wood. As I did so, I could hear hails coming and going between the old buccaneer and his comrades, and this sound of danger lent me wings. As soon as I was clear of the thicket, I ran as I never ran before, scarce minding the direction of my flight, so long as it led me from the murderers; and as I ran, fear grew and grew upon me, until it turned into a kind of frenzy.

Indeed, could any one be more entirely lost than I? When the gun fired, how should I dare to go down to the boats among those fiends, still smoking from their crime? Would

not the first of them who saw me wring my neck like a snipe's? Would not my absence itself be an evidence to them of my alarm, and therefore of my fatal knowledge? It was all over, I thought. Good-bye to the *Hispaniola;* good-bye to the squire, the doctor, and the captain! There was nothing left for me but death by starvation, or death by the hands of the mutineers.

All this while, as I say, I was still running, and, without taking any notice, I had drawn near to the foot of the little hill with the two peaks, and had got into a part of the island where the live-oaks grew more widely apart, and seemed more like forest trees in their bearing and dimensions. Mingled with these were a few scattered pines, some fifty, some nearer seventy, feet high. The air, too, smelt more freshly than down beside the marsh.

And here a fresh alarm brought me to a standstill with a thumping heart.

CHAPTER XV

THE MAN OF THE ISLAND

FROM the side of the hill, which was here steep and stony, a spout of gravel was dislodged, and fell rattling and bounding through the trees. My eyes turned instinctively in that direction, and I saw a figure leap with great rapidity behind the trunk of a pine. What it was, whether bear or man or monkey, I could in no wise tell. It seemed dark and shaggy; more I knew not. But the terror of this new apparition brought me to a stand.

I was now, it seemed, cut off upon both sides; behind me the murderers, before me this lurking nondescript. And immediately I began to prefer the dangers that I knew to those I knew not. Silver himself appeared less terrible in contrast with this creature of the woods, and I turned on my heel, and, looking sharply behind me over my shoulder, began to retrace my steps in the direction of the boats.

Instantly the figure reappeared, and, making a wide circuit, began to head me off. I was tired, at any rate; but had I been as fresh as

when I rose, I could see it was in vain for me to contend in speed with such an adversary. From trunk to trunk the creature flitted like a deer, running manlike on two legs, but unlike any man that I had ever seen, stooping almost double as it ran. Yet a man it was, I could no longer be in doubt about that.

I began to recall what I had heard of cannibals. I was within an ace of calling for help. But the mere fact that he was a man, however wild, had somewhat reassured me, and my fear of Silver began to revive in proportion. I stood still, therefore, and cast about for some method of escape; and as I was so thinking, the recollection of my pistol flashed into my mind. As soon as I remembered I was not defenceless, courage glowed again in my heart; and I set my face resolutely for this man of the island, and walked briskly towards him.

He was concealed, by this time, behind another tree-trunk; but he must have been watching me closely, for as soon as I began to move in his direction he reappeared and took a step to meet me. Then he hesitated, drew back, came forward again, and at last, to my wonder and confusion, threw himself on his knees and held out his clasped hands in supplication.

At that I once more stopped.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Ben Gunn," he answered, and his voice sounded hoarse and awkward, like a rusty lock.

"I'm poor Ben Gunn, I am; and I haven't spoke with a Christian these three years."

I could now see that he was a white man like myself, and that his features were even pleasing. His skin, wherever it was exposed, was burnt by the sun; even his lips were black, and his fair eyes looked quite startling in so dark a face. Of all the beggar-men that I had seen or fancied, he was the chief for raggedness. He was clothed with tatters of old ship's canvas and old sea cloth; and this extraordinary patchwork was all held together by a system of the most various and incongruous fastenings, brass buttons, bits of stick, and loops of tarry gaskin. About his waist he wore an old brass-buckled leather belt, which was the one thing solid in his whole accoutrement.

"Three years!" I cried. "Were you shipwrecked?"

"Nay, mate," said he—"marooned."

I had heard the word, and I knew it stood for a horrible kind of punishment common enough among the buccaneers, in which the offender is put ashore with a little powder and shot, and left behind on some desolate and distant island.

"Marooned three years agone," he continued, "and lived on goats since then, and berries, and oysters. Wherever a man is, says I, a man can do for himself. But, mate, my heart is sore for Christian diet. You mightn't happen

to have a piece of cheese about you, now? No? Well, many's the long night I've dreamed of cheese—toasted, mostly—and woke up again, and here I were."

"If ever I can get aboard again," said I, "you shall have cheese by the stone."

All this time he had been feeling the stuff of my jacket, smoothing my hands, looking at my boots, and generally, in the intervals of his speech, showing a childish pleasure in the presence of a fellow-creature. But at my last words he perked up into a kind of startled slyness.

"If ever you can get aboard again, says you?" he repeated. "Why, now, who's to hinder you?"

"Not you, I know," was my reply.

"And right you was," he cried. "Now you—what do you call yourself, mate?"

"Jim," I told him.

"Jim, Jim," says he, quite pleased apparently. "Well, now, Jim, I've lived that rough as you'd be ashamed to hear of. Now, for instance, you wouldn't think I had had a pious mother—to look at me?" he asked.

"Why, no, not in particular," I answered.

"Ah, well," said he, "but I had—*re*markable pious. And I was a civil, pious boy, and could rattle off my catechism that fast, as you couldn't tell one word from another. And here's what it come to, Jim, and it begun with chuck-farthen on the blessed grave-stones! That's what it begun with, but it went further'n that; and so

my mother told me, and predicked the whole, she did, the pious woman! But it were Providence that put me here. I've thought it all out in this here lonely island, and I'm back on piety. You don't catch me tasting rum so much; but just a thimbleful for luck, of course, the first chance I have. I'm bound I'll be good, and I see the way to. And, Jim"—looking all round him, and lowering his voice to a whisper—"I'm rich."

I now felt sure that the poor fellow had gone crazy in his solitude, and I suppose I must have shown the feeling in my face; for he repeated the statement hotly:—

"Rich! rich! I says. And I'll tell you what: I'll make a man of you, Jim. Ah, Jim, you'll bless your stars, you will, you was the first that found me!"

And at this there came suddenly a lowering shadow over his face, and he tightened his grasp upon my hand, and raised a forefinger threateningly before my eyes.

"Now, Jim, you tell me true: that ain't Flint's ship?" he asked.

At this I had a happy inspiration. I began to believe that I had found an ally, and I answered him at once.

"It's not Flint's ship, and Flint is dead; but I'll tell you true, as you ask me—there are some of Flint's hands aboard; worse luck for the rest of us."

"Not a man—with one—leg?" he gasped.

"Silver?" I asked.

"Ah, Silver!" says he; "that were his name."

"He's the cook; and the ringleader, too."

He was still holding me by the wrist, and at that he gave it quite a wring.

"If you was sent by Long John," he said, "I'm as good as pork, and I know it. But where was you, do you suppose?"

I had made my mind up in a moment, and by way of answer told him the whole story of our voyage, and the predicament in which we found ourselves. He heard me with the keenest interest, and when I had done he patted me on the head.

"You're a good lad, Jim," he said; "and you're all in a clove hitch, ain't you? Well, you just put your trust in Ben Gunn—Ben Gunn's the man to do it. Would you think it likely, now, that your squire would prove a liberal-minded one in case of help—him being in a clove hitch, as you remark?"

I told him the squire was the most liberal of men.

"Ay, but you see," returned Ben Gunn, "I didn't mean giving me a gate to keep, and a shuit of livery clothes, and such; that's not my mark, Jim. What I mean is, would he be likely to come down to the toon of, say one thousand pounds out of money that's as good as a man's own already?"

"I am sure he would," said I. "As it was, all hands were to share."

"*And* a passage home?" he added, with a look of great shrewdness.

"Why," I cried, "the squire's a gentleman. And besides, if we got rid of the others, we should want you to help work the vessel home."

"Ah," said he, "so you would." And he seemed very much relieved.

"Now, I'll tell you what," he went on. "So much I'll tell you, and no more. I were in Flint's ship when he buried the treasure; he and six along—six strong seamen. They was ashore nigh on a week, and us standing off and on in the old *Walrus*. One fine day up went the signal, and here come Flint by himself in a little boat, and his head done up in a blue scarf. The sun was getting up, and mortal white he looked about the cutwater. But, there he was, you mind, and the six all dead—dead and buried. How he done it, not a man aboard us could make out. It was battle, murder, and sudden death, leastways—him against six. Billy Bones was the mate; Long John, he was quartermaster; and they asked him where the treasure was. 'Ah,' says he, 'you can go ashore, if you like, and stay,' he says; 'but as for the ship, she'll beat up for more, by thunder!' That's what he said.

"Well, I was in another ship three years back, and we sighted this island. 'Boys,' said I,

'here's Flint's treasure; let's land and find it.' The cap'n was displeased at that; but my messmates were all of a mind, and landed. Twelve days they looked for it, and every day they had the worse word for me, until one fine morning all hands went aboard. 'As for you, Benjamin Gunn,' says they, 'here's a musket,' they says, 'and a spade, and pickaxe. You can stay here, and find Flint's money for yourself,' they says.

"Well, Jim, three years have I been here, and not a bite of Christian diet from that day to this. But now, you look here; look at me. Do I look like a man before the mast? No, says you. Nor I weren't, neither, I says."

And with that he winked and pinched me hard.

"Just you mention them words to your squire, Jim"—he went on: "Nor he weren't, neither—that's the words. Three years he were the man of this island, light and dark, fair and rain; and sometimes he would, maybe, think upon a prayer (says you), and sometimes he would, maybe, think of his old mother, so be as she's alive (you'll say); but the most part of Gunn's time (this is what you'll say)—the most part of his time was took up with another matter. And then you'll give him a nip, like I do."

And he pinched me again in the most confidential manner.

"Then," he continued—"then you'll up, and

you'll say this:—Gunn is a good man (you'll say), and he puts a precious sight more confidence—a precious sight, mind that—in a gen'leman born than in these gen'lemen of fortune, having been one hisself."

"Well," I said, "I don't understand one word that you've been saying. But that's neither here nor there; for how am I to get on board?"

"Ah," said he, "that's the hitch, for sure. Well, there's my boat, that I made with my two hands. I keep her under the white rock. If the worst come to the worst, we might try that after dark.—Hi!" he broke out, "what's that?"

For just then, although the sun had still an hour or two to run, all the echoes of the island awoke and bellowed to the thunder of a cannon.

"They have begun to fight!" I cried. "Follow me."

And I began to run towards the anchorage, my terrors all forgotten; while, close at my side, the marooned man in his goatskins trotted easily and lightly.

"Left, left," says he; "keep to your left hand, mate Jim! Under the trees with you! There's where I killed my first goat. They don't come down here now; they're all mast-headed on them mountings for the fear of Benjamin Gunn. Ah! and there's the cetemery"—cemetery, he must have meant. "You see the mounds? I come here and prayed, nows and thens, when I

thought maybe a Sunday would be about doo. It weren't quite a chapel, but it seemed more solemn like; and then, says you, Ben Gunn was short-handed—no chapling, nor so much as a Bible and a flag, you says."

So he kept talking as I ran, neither expecting nor receiving any answer.

The cannon-shot was followed, after a considerable interval, by a volley of small arms.

Another pause, and then, not a quarter of a mile in front of me, I beheld the Union Jack flutter in the air above a wood.

PART IV
THE STOCKADE

CHAPTER XVI

NARRATIVE CONTINUED BY THE DOCTOR: HOW THE SHIP WAS ABANDONED

IT was about half-past one—three bells in the sea phrase—that the two boats went ashore from the *Hispaniola*. The captain, the squire, and I were talking matters over in the cabin. Had there been a breath of wind, we should have fallen on the six mutineers who were left aboard with us, slipped our cable, and away to sea. But the wind was wanting; and, to complete our helplessness, down came Hunter with the news that Jim Hawkins had slipped into a boat and was gone ashore with the rest.

It never occurred to us to doubt Jim Hawkins; but we were alarmed for his safety. With the men in the temper they were in, it seemed an even chance if we should see the lad again. We ran on deck. The pitch was bubbling in the seams; the nasty stench of the place turned me sick; if ever a man smelt fever and dysentery, it was in that abominable anchorage. The six scoundrels were sitting grumbling under a sail in the forecastle; ashore we could see the

gigs made fast, and a man sitting in each, hard by where the river runs in. One of them was whistling "Lillibullero."

Waiting was a strain; and it was decided that Hunter and I should go ashore with the jolly-boat, in quest of information.

The gigs had leaned to their right; but Hunter and I pulled straight in, in the direction of the stockade upon the chart. The two who were left guarding their boats seemed in a bustle at our appearance; "Lillibullero" stopped off, and I could see the pair discussing what they ought to do. Had they gone and told Silver, all might have turned out differently; but they had their orders, I suppose, and decided to sit quietly where they were and hark back again to "Lillibullero."

There was a slight bend in the coast, and I steered so as to put it between us; even before we landed we had thus lost sight of the gigs. I jumped out and came as near running as I durst, with a big silk handkerchief under my hat for coolness' sake, and a brace of pistols ready primed for safety.

I had not gone a hundred yards when I reached the stockade.

This was how it was: a spring of clear water rose almost at the top of a knoll. Well, on the knoll, and enclosing the spring, they had clapped a stout log-house, fit to hold two-score of people on a pinch, and loopholed for musketry

on every side. All round this they had cleared a wide space, and then the thing was completed by a paling six feet high, without door or opening, too strong to pull down without time and labour, and too open to shelter the besiegers. The people in the log-house had them in every way; they stood quiet in shelter and shot the others like partridges. All they wanted was a good watch and food; for, short of a complete surprise, they might have held the place against a regiment.

What particularly took my fancy was the spring. For, though we had a good enough place of it in the cabin of the *Hispaniola*, with plenty of arms and ammunition, and things to eat, and excellent wines, there had been one thing overlooked—we had no water. I was thinking this over, when there came ringing over the island the cry of a man at the point of death. I was not new to violent death—I have served his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland, and got a wound myself at Fontenoy—but I know my pulse went dot and carry one. "Jim Hawkins is gone," was my first thought.

It is something to have been an old soldier, but more still to have been a doctor. There is no time to dilly-dally in our work. And so now I made up my mind instantly, and with no time lost returned to the shore, and jumped on board the jolly-boat.

By good fortune Hunter pulled a good oar. We made the water fly; and the boat was soon alongside, and I aboard the schooner.

I found them all shaken, as was natural. The squire was sitting down, as white as a sheet, thinking of the harm he had led us to, the good soul! and one of the six forecastle hands was little better.

"There's a man," says Captain Smollett, nodding towards him, "new to this work. He came nigh-hand fainting, doctor, when he heard the cry. Another touch of the rudder and that man would join us."

I told my plan to the captain, and between us we settled on the details of its accomplishment.

We put old Redruth in the gallery between the cabin and the forecastle, with three or four loaded muskets and a mattress for protection. Hunter brought the boat round under the stern-port, and Joyce and I set to work loading her with powder-tins, muskets, bags of biscuits, kegs of pork, a cask of cognac, and my invaluable medicine-chest.

In the meantime, the squire and the captain stayed on deck, and the latter hailed the cox-swain, who was the principal man aboard.

"Mr. Hands," he said, "here are two of us with a brace of pistols each. If any one of you six makes a signal of any description, that man's dead."

They were a good deal taken aback; and, after

a little consultation, one and all tumbled down the fore companion, thinking, no doubt, to take us on the rear. But when they saw Redruth waiting for them in the sparred gallery, they went about ship at once, and a head popped out again on deck.

"Down, dog!" cried the captain.

And the head popped back again; and we heard no more, for the time, of these six very faint-hearted seamen.

By this time, tumbling things in as they came, we had the jolly-boat loaded as much as we dared. Joyce and I got out through the stern-port, and we made for shore again, as fast as oars could take us.

This second trip fairly aroused the watchers along shore. "Lillibullero" was dropped again; and just before we lost sight of them behind the little point, one of them whipped ashore and disappeared. I had half a mind to change my plan and destroy their boats, but I feared that Silver and the others might be close at hand, and all might very well be lost by trying for too much.

We had soon touched land in the same place as before, and set to provision the block house. All three made the first journey, heavily laden, and tossed our stores over the palisade. Then, leaving Joyce to guard them—one man, to be sure, but with half a dozen muskets—Hunter and I returned to the jolly-boat, and loaded

ourselves once more. So we proceeded without pausing to take breath, till the whole cargo was bestowed, when the two servants took up their position in the block house, and I, with all my power, sculled back to the *Hispaniola*.

That we should have risked a second boat-load seems more daring than it really was. They had the advantage of numbers, of course, but we had the advantage of arms. Not one of the men ashore had a musket, and before they could get within range for pistol shooting, we flattered ourselves we should be able to give a good account of a half-dozen at least.

The squire was waiting for me at the stern window, all his faintness gone from him. He caught the painter and made it fast, and we fell to loading the boat for our very lives. Pork, powder, and biscuit was the cargo, with only a musket and a cutlass apiece for the squire and me and Redruth and the captain. The rest of the arms and powder we dropped overboard in two fathoms and a half of water, so that we could see the bright steel shining far below us in the sun, on the clean, sandy bottom.

By this time the tide was beginning to ebb, and the ship was swinging round to her anchor. Voices were heard faintly halloaing in the direction of the two gigs; and though this reassured us for Joyce and Hunter, who were well to the eastward, it warned our party to be off.

Redruth retreated from his place in the gallery,

and dropped into the boat, which we then brought round to the ship's counter, to be handier for Captain Smollett.

"Now, men," said he, "do you hear me?"

There was no answer from the forecastle.

"It's to you, Abraham Gray—it's to you I am speaking."

Still no reply.

"Gray," resumed Mr. Smollett, a little louder, "I am leaving this ship, and I order you to follow your captain. I know you are a good man at bottom, and I daresay not one of the lot of you's as bad as he makes out. I have my watch here in my hand; I give you thirty seconds to join me in."

There was a pause.

"Come, my fine fellow," continued the captain, "don't hang so long in stays. I'm risking my life, and the lives of these good gentlemen, every second."

There was a sudden scuffle, a sound of blows, and out burst Abraham Gray with a knife-cut on the side of the cheek, and came running to the captain, like a dog to the whistle.

"I'm with you, sir," said he.

And the next moment he and the captain had dropped aboard of us, and we had shoved off and given way.

We were clear out of the ship; but not yet ashore in our stockade.

CHAPTER XVII

NARRATIVE CONTINUED BY THE DOCTOR: THE JOLLY-BOAT'S LAST TRIP

THIS fifth trip was quite different from any of the others. In the first place, the little gallipot of a boat that we were in was gravely overloaded. Five grown men, and three of them—Trelawney, Redruth, and the captain—over six feet high, was already more than she was meant to carry. Add to that the powder, pork, and bread-bags. The gunwale was lipping astern. Several times we shipped a little water, and my breeches and the tails of my coat were all soaking wet before we had gone a hundred yards.

The captain made us trim the boat, and we got her to lie a little more evenly. All the same, we were afraid to breathe.

In the second place, the ebb was now making—a strong rippling current running westward through the basin, and then south'ard and seaward down the straits by which we had entered in the morning. Even the ripples were a danger to our overloaded craft; but the

worst of it was that we were swept out of our true course, and away from our proper landing-place behind the point. If we let the current have its way we should come ashore beside the gigs, where the pirates might appear at any moment.

"I cannot keep her head for the stockade, sir," said I to the captain. I was steering, while he and Redruth, two fresh men, were at the oars. "The tide keeps washing her down. Could you pull a little stronger?"

"Not without swamping the boat," said he. "You must bear up, sir, if you please—bear up until you see you're gaining."

I tried, and found by experiment that the tide kept sweeping us westward until I had laid her head due east, or just about right angles to the way we ought to go.

"We'll never get ashore at this rate," said I.

"If it's the only course that we can lie, sir, we must even lie it," returned the captain. "We must keep up-stream. You see, sir," he went on, "if once we dropped to leeward of the landing-place, it's hard to say where we should get ashore, besides the chance of being boarded by the gigs; whereas, the way we go the current must slacken, and then we can dodge back along the shore."

"The current's less a'ready, sir," said the man Gray, who was sitting in the fore-sheets; "you can ease her off a bit."

"Thank you, my man," said I, quite as if nothing had happened; for we had all quietly made up our minds to treat him like one of ourselves.

Suddenly the captain spoke up again, and I thought his voice was a little changed.

"The gun!" said he.

"I have thought of that," said I, for I made sure he was thinking of a bombardment of the fort. "They could never get the gun ashore, and if they did, they could never haul it through the woods."

"Look astern, doctor," replied the captain.

We had entirely forgotten the long nine; and there, to our horror, were the five rogues busy about her, getting off her jacket, as they called the stout tarpaulin cover under which she sailed. Not only that, but it flashed into my mind at the same moment that the round-shot and the powder for the gun had been left behind, and a stroke with an axe would put it all into the possession of the evil ones aboard.

"Israel was Flint's gunner," said Gray, hoarsely.

At any risk, we put the boat's head direct for the landing-place. By this time we had got so far out of the run of the current that we kept steerage way even at our necessarily gentle rate of rowing, and I could keep her steady for the goal. But the worst of it was, that with

the course I now held, we turned our broadside instead of our stern to the *Hispaniola*, and offered a target like a barn-door.

I could hear, as well as see, that brandy-faced rascal, Israel Hands, plumping down a round-shot on the deck.

"Who's the best shot?" asked the captain.

"Mr. Trelawney, out and away," said I.

"Mr. Trelawney, will you please pick me off one of these men, sir? Hands, if possible," said the captain.

Trelawney was as cool as steel. He looked to the priming of his gun.

"Now," cried the captain, "easy with that gun, sir, or you'll swamp the boat. All hands stand by to trim her when he aims."

The squire raised his gun, the rowing ceased, and we leaned over to the other side to keep the balance, and all was so nicely contrived that we did not ship a drop.

They had the gun, by this time, slewed round upon the swivel, and Hands, who was at the muzzle with the rammer, was, in consequence, the most exposed. However, we had no luck; for just as Trelawney fired, down he stooped, the ball whistled over him, and it was one of the other four who fell.

The cry he gave was echoed, not only by his companions on board, but by a great number of voices from the shore, and looking in that direction I saw the other pirates trooping out

from among the trees and tumbling into their places in the boats.

"Here come the gigs, sir," said I.

"Give way then," cried the captain. "We mustn't mind if we swamp her now. If we can't get ashore, all's up."

"Only one of the gigs is being manned, sir," I added, "the crew of the other most likely going round by shore to cut us off."

"They'll have a hot run, sir," returned the captain. "Jack ashore, you know. It's not them I mind; it's the round-shot. Carpet bowls! My lady's maid couldn't miss. Tell us, squire, when you see the match, and we'll hold water."

In the meanwhile we had been making headway at a good pace for a boat so overloaded, and we had shipped but little water in the process. We were now close in; thirty or forty strokes and we should beach her; for the ebb had already disclosed a narrow belt of sand below the clustering trees. The gig was no longer to be feared; the little point had already concealed it from our eyes. The ebb-tide, which had so cruelly delayed us, was now making reparation, and delaying our assailants. The one source of danger was the gun.

"If I durst," said the captain, "I'd stop and pick off another man."

But it was plain that they meant nothing should delay their shot. They had never so

much as looked at their fallen comrade, though he was not dead, and I could see him trying to crawl away.

"Ready!" cried the squire.

"Hold!" cried the captain, quick as an echo.

And he and Redruth backed with a great heave that sent her stern bodily under water. The report fell in at the same instant of time. This was the first that Jim heard, the sound of the squire's shot not having reached him. Where the ball passed, not one of us precisely knew; but I fancy it must have been over our heads, and that the wind of it may have contributed to our disaster.

At any rate, the boat sank by the stern, quite gently, in three feet of water, leaving the captain and myself, facing each other, on our feet. The other three took complete headers, and came up again, drenched and bubbling.

So far there was no great harm. No lives were lost, and we could wade ashore in safety. But there were all our stores at the bottom, and, to make things worse, only two guns out of five remained in a state for service. Mine I had snatched from my knees and held over my head, by a sort of instinct. As for the captain, he had carried his over his shoulder by a bandoleer, and, like a wise man, lock uppermost. The other three had gone down with the boat.

To add to our concern, we heard voices al-

ready drawing near us in the woods along shore; and we had not only the danger of being cut off from the stockade in our half-crippled state, but the fear before us whether, if Hunter and Joyce were attacked by half a dozen, they would have the sense and conduct to stand firm. Hunter was steady, that we knew; Joyce was a doubtful case—a pleasant, polite man for a valet, and to brush one's clothes, but not entirely fitted for a man of war.

With all this in our minds, we waded ashore as fast as we could, leaving behind us the poor jolly-boat, and a good half of all our powder and provisions.

CHAPTER XVIII

NARRATIVE CONTINUED BY THE DOCTOR: END OF THE FIRST DAY'S FIGHTING

WE made our best speed across the strip of wood that now divided us from the stockade; and at every step we took the voices of the buccaneers rang nearer. Soon we could hear their footfalls as they ran, and the cracking of the branches as they breasted across a bit of thicket.

I began to see we should have a brush for it in earnest, and looked to my priming.

"Captain," said I, "Trelawney is the dead shot. Give him your gun; his own is useless."

They exchanged guns, and Trelawney, silent and cool as he had been since the beginning of the bustle, hung a moment on his heel to see that all was fit for service. At the same time, observing Gray to be unarmed, I handed him my cutlass. It did all our hearts good to see him spit in his hand, knit his brows, and make the blade sing through the air. It was plain from every line of his body that our new hand was worth his salt.

Forty paces farther we came to the edge of the wood and saw the stockade in front of us. We struck the enclosure about the middle of the south side, and, almost at the same time, seven mutineers—Job Anderson, the boatswain, at their head—appeared in full cry at the south-western corner.

They paused, as if taken aback; and before they recovered, not only the squire and I, but Hunter and Joyce from the block-house, had time to fire. The four shots came in rather a scattering volley; but they did the business: one of the enemy actually fell; and the rest, without hesitation, turned and plunged into the trees.

After reloading, we walked down the outside of the palisade to see to the fallen enemy. He was stone dead—shot through the heart.

We began to rejoice over our good success, when just at that moment a pistol cracked in the bush, a ball whistled close past my ear, and poor Tom Redruth stumbled and fell his length on the ground. Both the squire and I returned the shot; but as we had nothing to aim at, it is probable we only wasted powder. Then we reloaded, and turned our attention to poor Tom.

The captain and Gray were already examining him; and I saw with half an eye that all was over.

I believe the readiness of our return volley had scattered the mutineers once more, for we were suffered without further molestation to

get the poor old gamekeeper hoisted over the stockade, and carried, groaning and bleeding, into the log-house.

Poor old fellow, he had not uttered one word of surprise, complaint, fear, or even acquiescence, from the very beginning of our troubles till now, when we had laid him down in the log-house to die. He had lain like a Trojan behind his mattress in the gallery; he had followed every order silently, doggedly, and well; he was the oldest of our party by a score of years; and now, sullen, old, serviceable servant, it was he that was to die.

The squire dropped down beside him on his knees and kissed his hand, crying like a child.

"Be I going, doctor?" he asked.

"Tom, my man," said I, "you're going home."

"I wish I had had a lick at them with the gun first," he replied.

"Tom," said the squire, "say you forgive me, won't you?"

"Would that be respectful like, from me to you, squire?" was the answer. "Howsoever, so be it, amen!"

After a little while of silence, he said he thought somebody might read a prayer. "It's the custom, sir," he added, apologetically. And not long after, without another word, he passed away.

In the meantime the captain, whom I had observed to be wonderfully swollen about the

chest and pockets, had turned out a great many various stores—the British colours, a Bible, a coil of stoutish rope, pen, ink, the log-book, and pounds of tobacco. He had found a longish fir-tree lying felled and trimmed in the enclosure, and, with the help of Hunter, he had set it up at the corner of the log-house where the trunks crossed and made an angle. Then, climbing on the roof, he had with his own hand bent and run up the colours.

This seemed mightily to relieve him. He re-entered the log-house, and set about counting up the stores, as if nothing else existed. But he had an eye on Tom's passage for all that; and as soon as all was over, came forward with another flag, and reverently spread it on the body.

"Don't you take on, sir," he said, shaking the squire's hand. "All's well with him; no fear for a hand that's been shot down in his duty to captain and owner. It mayn't be good divinity, but it's a fact."

Then he pulled me aside.

"Dr. Livesey," he said, "in how many weeks do you and squire expect the consort?"

I told him it was a question, not of weeks, but of months; that if we were not back by the end of August, Blandly was to send to find us; but neither sooner nor later. "You can calculate for yourself," I said.

"Why, yes," returned the captain, scratching

his head, "and making a large allowance, sir, for all the gifts of Providence, I should say we were pretty close hauled."

"How do you mean?" I asked.

"It's a pity, sir, we lost that second load. That's what I mean," replied the captain. "As for powder and shot, we'll do. But the rations are short, very short—so short, Dr. Livesey, that we're, perhaps, as well without that extra mouth."

And he pointed to the dead body under the flag.

Just then, with a roar and a whistle, a round-shot passed high above the roof of the log-house and plumped far beyond us in the wood.

"Oho!" said the captain. "Blaze away! You've little enough powder already, my lads."

At the second trial, the aim was better, and the ball descended inside the stockade, scattering a cloud of sand, but doing no further damage.

"Captain," said the squire, "the house is quite invisible from the ship. It must be the flag they are aiming at. Would it not be wiser to take it in?"

"Strike my colours!" cried the captain. "No, sir, not I;" and, as soon as he had said the words, I think we all agreed with him. For it was not only a piece of stout, seamanly, good feeling; it was good policy besides, and showed our enemies that we despised their cannonade.

All through the evening they kept thundering away. Ball after ball flew over or fell short, or kicked up the sand in the enclosure; but they had to fire so high that the shot fell dead and buried itself in the soft sand. We had no ricochet to fear; and though one popped in through the roof of the log-house and out again through the floor, we soon got used to that sort of horse-play, and minded it no more than cricket.

"There is one thing good about all this," observed the captain: "the wood in front of us is likely clear. The ebb has made a good while; our stores should be uncovered. Volunteers to go and bring in pork."

Gray and Hunter were the first to come forward. Well armed, they stole out of the stockade; but it proved a useless mission. The mutineers were bolder than we fancied, or they put more trust in Israel's gunnery. For four or five of them were busy carrying off our stores, and wading out with them to one of the gigs that lay close by, pulling an oar or so to hold her steady against the current. Silver was in the sternsheets in command; and every man of them was now provided with a musket from some secret magazine of their own.

The captain sat down to his log, and here is the beginning of the entry:—

"Alexander Smollett, master; David Livesey, ship's doctor; Abraham Gray, carpenter's mate;

John Trelawney, owner; John Hunter and Richard Joyce, owner's servants, landsmen—being all that is left faithful of the ship's company—with stores for ten days at short rations, came ashore this day, and flew British colours on the log-house in Treasure Island. Thomas Redruth, owner's servant, landsman, shot by the mutineers; James Hawkins, cabin-boy——"

And at the same time I was wondering over poor Jim Hawkins's fate.

A hail on the land side.

"Somebody hailing us," said Hunter, who was on guard.

"Doctor! squire! captain! Hullo, Hunter, is that you?" came the cries.

And I ran to the door in time to see Jim Hawkins, safe and sound, come climbing over the stockade.

CHAPTER XIX

NARRATIVE RESUMED BY JIM HAWKINS: THE GARRISON IN THE STOCKADE

AS soon as Ben Gunn saw the colours he came to a halt, stopped me by the arm, and sat down.

"Now," said he, "there's your friends, sure enough."

"Far more likely it's the mutineers," I answered.

"That!" he cried. "Why, in a place like this, where nobody puts in but gen'lemen of fortune, Silver would fly the Jolly Roger, you don't make no doubt of that. No; that's your friends. There's been blows, too, and I reckon your friends has had the best of it; and here they are ashore in the old stockade, as was made years and years ago by Flint. Ah, he was the man to have a headpiece, was Flint! Barring rum, his match were never seen. He were afraid of none, not he; on'y Silver—Silver was that genteel."

"Well," said I, "that may be so, and so be it; all the more reason that I should hurry on and join my friends."

"Nay, mate," returned Ben, "not you. You're a good boy, or I'm mistook; but you're on'y a boy, all told. Now, Ben Gunn is fly. Rum wouldn't bring me there, where you're going—not rum wouldn't, till I see your born gen'leman, and gets it on his word of honour. And you won't forget my words: 'A precious sight (that's what you'll say), a precious sight more confidence'—and then nips him."

And he pinched me the third time with the same air of cleverness.

"And when Ben Gunn is wanted, you know where to find him, Jim. Just where you found him to-day. And him that comes is to have a white thing in his hand: and he's to come alone. Oh! and you'll say this: 'Ben Gunn,' says you, 'has reasons of his own.'"

"Well," said I, "I believe I understand. You have something to propose, and you wish to see the squire or the doctor; and you're to be found where I found you. Is that all?"

"And when? says you," he added. "Why, from about noon observation to about six bells."

"Good," said I, "and now may I go?"

"You won't forget?" he inquired anxiously. "Precious sight, and reasons of his own, says you. Reasons of his own; that's the mainstay; as between man and man. Well, then"—still holding me—"I reckon you can go, Jim. And, Jim, if you was to see Silver, you wouldn't go for to sell Ben Gunn? wild horses wouldn't

draw it from you? No, says you. And if them pirates camp ashore, Jim, what would you say but there'd be widders in the morning?"

Here he was interrupted by a loud report, and a cannon ball came tearing through the trees and pitched in the sand, not a hundred yards from where we two were talking. The next moment each of us had taken to his heels in a different direction.

For a good hour to come frequent reports shook the island, and balls kept crashing through the woods. I moved from hiding-place to hiding-place, always pursued, or so it seemed to me, by these terrifying missiles. But towards the end of the bombardment, though still I durst not venture in the direction of the stockade, where the balls fell oftenest, I had begun, in a manner, to pluck up my heart again; and after a long détour to the east, crept down among the shore-side trees.

The sun had just set, the sea breeze was rustling and tumbling in the woods, and ruffling the grey surface of the anchorage; the tide, too, was far out, and great tracts of sand lay uncovered; the air, after the heat of the day, chilled me through my jacket.

The *Hispaniola* still lay where she had anchored; but, sure enough, there was the Jolly Roger—the black flag of piracy—flying from her peak. Even as I looked, there came another red flash and another report, that sent the echoes

clattering, and one more round-shot whistled through the air. It was the last of the cannonade.

I lay for some time, watching the bustle which succeeded the attack. Men were demolishing something with axes on the beach near the stockade; the poor jolly-boat, I afterwards discovered. Away, near the mouth of the river, a great fire was glowing among the trees, and between that point and the ship one of the gigs kept coming and going, the men, whom I had seen so gloomy, shouting at the oars like children. But there was a sound in their voices which suggested rum.

At length I thought I might return towards the stockade. I was pretty far down on the low, sandy spit that encloses the anchorage to the east, and is joined at half-water to Skeleton Island; and now, as I rose to my feet, I saw, some distance farther down the spit, and rising from among low bushes, an isolated rock, pretty high, and peculiarly white in colour. It occurred to me that this might be the white rock of which Ben Gunn had spoken, and that some day or other a boat might be wanted, and I should know where to look for one.

Then I skirted among the woods until I had regained the rear, or shoreward side, of the stockade, and was soon warmly welcomed by the faithful party.

I had soon told my story, and began to look about me. The log-house was made of unsquared trunks of pine—roofs, walls, and floor.

The latter stood in several places as much as a foot or a foot and a half above the surface of the sand. There was a porch at the door, and under this porch the little spring welled up into an artificial basin of a rather odd kind—no other than a great ship's kettle of iron, with the bottom knocked out, and sunk "to her bearings," as the captain said, among the sand.

Little had been left beside the framework of the house; but in one corner there was a stone slab laid down by way of hearth, and an old rusty iron basket to contain the fire.

The slopes of the knoll and all the inside of the stockade had been cleared of timber to build the house, and we could see by the stumps what a fine and lofty grove had been destroyed. Most of the soil had been washed away or buried in drift after the removal of the trees; only where the streamlet ran down from the kettle a thick bed of moss and some ferns and little creeping bushes were still green among the sand. Very close around the stockade—too close for defence, they said—the wood still flourished high and dense, all of fir on the land side, but towards the sea with a large admixture of live-oaks.

The cold evening breeze, of which I have spoken, whistled through every chink of the rude building, and sprinkled the floor with a continual rain of fine sand. There was sand in our eyes, sand in our teeth, sand in our suppers, sand dancing in the spring at the bottom

of the kettle, for all the world like porridge beginning to boil. Our chimney was a square hole in the roof; it was but a little part of the smoke that found its way out, and the rest eddied about the house, and kept us coughing and piping the eye.

Add to this that Gray, the new man, had his face tied up in a bandage for a cut he had got in breaking away from the mutineers; and that poor old Tom Redruth, still unburied, lay along the wall, stiff and stark, under the Union Jack.

If we had been allowed to sit idle, we should all have fallen in the blues, but Captain Smollett was never the man for that. All hands were called up before him, and he divided us into watches. The doctor, and Gray, and I, for one; the squire, Hunter, and Joyce, upon the other. Tired though we all were, two were sent out for firewood; two more were set to dig a grave for Redruth; the doctor was named cook; I was put sentry at the door; and the captain himself went from one to another, keeping up our spirits and lending a hand wherever it was wanted.

From time to time the doctor came to the door for a little air and to rest his eyes, which were almost smoked out of his head; and whenever he did so, he had a word for me.

"That man Smollett," he said once, "is a better man than I am. And when I say that it means a deal, Jim."

Another time he came and was silent for a while. Then he put his head on one side, and looked at me.

"Is this Ben Gunn a man?" he asked.

"I do not know, sir," said I. "I am not very sure whether he's sane."

"If there's any doubt about the matter, he is," returned the doctor. "A man who has been three years biting his nails on a desert island, Jim, can't expect to appear as sane as you or me. It doesn't lie in human nature. Was it cheese you said he had a fancy for?"

"Yes, sir, cheese," I answered.

"Well, Jim," says he, "just see the good that comes of being dainty in your food. You've seen my snuff-box, haven't you? And you never saw me take snuff; the reason being that in my snuff-box I carry a piece of Parmesan cheese—a cheese made in Italy, very nutritious. Well, that's for Ben Gunn!"

Before supper was eaten we buried old Tom in the sand, and stood round him for a while bare-headed in the breeze. A good deal of firewood had been got in, but not enough for the captain's fancy; and he shook his head over it, and told us we "must get back to this to-morrow rather livelier." Then, when we had eaten our pork, and each had a good stiff glass of brandy grog, the three chiefs got together in a corner to discuss our prospects.

It appears they were at their wit's end what

to do, the stores being so low that we must have been starved into surrender long before help came. But our best hope, it was decided, was to kill off the buccaneers until they either hauled down their flag or ran away with the *Hispaniola*. From nineteen they were already reduced to fifteen, two others were wounded, and one, at least—the man shot beside the gun—severely wounded, if he were not dead. Every time we had a crack at them, we were to take it, saving our own lives, with the extremest care. And, besides that, we had two able allies—rum and the climate.

As for the first, though we were about half a mile away, we could hear them roaring and singing late into the night; and as for the second, the doctor staked his wig that, camped where they were in the marsh, and unprovided with remedies, the half of them would be on their backs before a week.

"So," he added, "if we are not all shot down first, they'll be glad to be packing in the schooner. It's always a ship, and they can get to buccaneering again, I suppose."

"First ship that ever I lost," said Captain Smollett.

I was dead tired, as you may fancy; and when I got to sleep, which was not till after a great deal of tossing, I slept like a log of wood.

The rest had long been up, and had already breakfasted and increased the pile of firewood

by about half as much again, when I was wakened by a bustle and the sound of voices.

"Flag of truce!" I heard some one say; and then, immediately after, with a cry of surprise, "Silver himself!"

And, at that, up I jumped, and, rubbing my eyes, ran to a loophole in the wall.

CHAPTER XX

SILVER'S EMBASSY

SURE enough, there were two men just outside the stockade, one of them waving a white cloth; the other no less a person than Silver himself, standing placidly by.

It was still quite early, and the coolest morning that I think I ever was abroad in; a chill that pierced into the marrow. The sky was bright and cloudless overhead, and the tops of the trees shone rosily in the sun. But where Silver stood with his lieutenant all was still in shadow, and they waded knee deep in a low, white vapour that had crawled during the night out of the morass. The chill and the vapour taken together told a poor tale of the island. It was plainly a damp, feverish, unhealthy spot.

"Keep indoors, men," said the captain. "Ten to one this is a trick."

Then he hailed the buccaneer.

"Who goes? Stand, or we fire."

"Flag of truce," cried Silver.

The captain was in the porch, keeping himself carefully out of the way of a treacherous shot

should any be intended. He turned and spoke to us:—

"Doctor's watch on the look-out. Dr. Livesey, take the north side, if you please; Jim, the east; Gray, west. The watch below, all hands to load muskets. Lively, men, and careful."

And then he turned again to the mutineers.

"And what do you want with your flag of truce?" he cried.

This time it was the other man who replied.

"Cap'n Silver, sir, to come on board and make terms," he shouted.

"Cap'n Silver! Don't know him. Who's he?" cried the captain. And we could hear him adding to himself: "Cap'n, is it? My heart, and here's promotion!"

Long John answered for himself.

"Me, sir. These poor lads have chosen me cap'n, after your desertion, sir"—laying a particular emphasis upon the word "desertion." "We're willing to submit, if we can come to terms, and no bones about it. All I ask is your word, Cap'n Smollett, to let me safe and sound out of this here stockade, and one minute to get out o' shot before a gun is fired."

"My man," said Captain Smollett, "I have not the slightest desire to talk to you. If you wish to talk to me, you can come, that's all. If there's any treachery, it'll be on your side, and the Lord help you."

"That's enough, cap'n," shouted Long John,

cheerily. "A word from you's enough. I know a gentleman, and you may lay to that."

We could see the man who carried the flag of truce attempting to hold Silver back. Nor was that wonderful, seeing how cavalier had been the captain's answer. But Silver laughed at him aloud, and slapped him on the back, as if the idea of alarm had been absurd. Then he advanced to the stockade, threw over his crutch, got a leg up, and with great vigour and skill succeeded in surmounting the fence and dropping safely to the other side.

I will confess that I was far too much taken up with what was going on to be of the slightest use as sentry; indeed, I had already deserted my eastern loophole, and crept up behind the captain, who had now seated himself on the threshold, with his elbows on his knees, his head in his hands, and his eyes fixed on the water, as it bubbled out of the old iron kettle in the sand. He was whistling to himself, "Come, Lasses and Lads."

Silver had terrible hard work getting up the knoll. What with the steepness of the incline, the thick tree stumps, and the soft sand, he and his crutch were as helpless as a ship in stays. But he stuck to it like a man in silence, and at last arrived before the captain, whom he saluted in the handsomest style. He was tricked out in his best; an immense blue coat, thick with brass buttons, hung as low as to his knees, and

a fine laced hat was set on the back of his head.

"Here you are, my man," said the captain, raising his head. "You had better sit down."

"You ain't a-going to let me inside, cap'n?" complained Long John. "It's a main cold morning, to be sure, sir, to sit outside upon the sand."

"Why, Silver," said the captain, "if you had pleased to be an honest man, you might have been sitting in your galley. It's your own doing. You're either my ship's cook—and then you were treated handsome—or Cap'n Silver, a common mutineer and pirate, and then you can go hang!"

"Well, well, cap'n," returned the sea cook, sitting down as he was bidden on the sand, "you'll have to give me a hand up again, that's all. A sweet pretty place you have of it here. Ah, there's Jim! The top of the morning to you, Jim. Doctor, here's my service. Why, there you all are together like a happy family, in a manner of speaking."

"If you have anything to say, my man, better say it," said the captain.

"Right you were, Cap'n Smollett," replied Silver. "Dooty is dooty, to be sure. Well, now, you look here, that was a good lay of yours last night. I don't deny it was a good lay. Some of you pretty handy with a hand-spike-end. And I'll not deny neither but what

some of my people was shook—maybe all was shook; maybe I was shook myself; maybe that's why I'm here for terms. But you mark me, cap'n, it won't do twice, by thunder! We'll have to do sentry-go, and ease off a point or so on the rum. Maybe you think we were all a sheet in the wind's eye. But I'll tell you I was sober; I was on'y dog-tired; and if I'd awoke a second sooner I'd 'a' caught you at the act, I would. He wasn't dead when I got round to him, not he."

"Well?" says Captain Smollett, as cool as can be.

All that Silver said was a riddle to him, but you would never have guessed it from his tone. As for me, I began to have an inkling. Ben Gunn's last words came back to my mind. I began to suppose that he had paid the buccaneers a visit while they all lay drunk together round their fire, and I reckoned up with glee that we had only fourteen enemies to deal with.

"Well, here it is," said Silver. "We want that treasure, and we'll have it—that's our point! You would just as soon save your lives, I reckon; and that's yours. You have a chart, haven't you?"

"That's as may be," replied the captain.

"Oh, well, you have, I know that," returned Long John. "You needn't be so husky with a man; there ain't a particle of service in that, and you may lay to it. What I mean is, we

want your chart. Now, I never meant you no harm, myself."

"That won't do with me, my man," interrupted the captain. "We know exactly what you meant to do, and we don't care; for now, you see, you can't do it."

And the captain looked at him calmly, and proceeded to fill a pipe.

"If Abe Gray——" Silver broke out.

"Avast there!" cried Mr. Smollett. "Gray told me nothing, and I asked him nothing; and what's more, I would see you and him and this whole island blown clean out of the water into blazes first. So there's my mind for you, my man, on that."

This little whiff of temper seemed to cool Silver down. He had been growing nettled before, but now he pulled himself together.

"Like enough," said he. "I would set no limits to what gentlemen might consider shipshape, or might not, as the case were. And, seein' as how you are about to take a pipe, cap'n, I'll make so free as do likewise."

And he filled a pipe and lighted it; and the two men sat silently smoking for quite a while, now looking each other in the face, now stopping their tobacco, now leaning forward to spit. It was as good as the play to see them.

"Now," resumed Silver, "here it is. You give us the chart to get the treasure by, and drop shooting poor seamen, and stoving of their

heads in while asleep. You do that, and we'll offer you a choice. Either you come aboard along of us, once the treasure shipped, and then I'll give you my affy-davy, upon my word of honour, to clap you somewhere safe ashore. Or, if that ain't to your fancy, some of my hands being rough, and having old scores, on account of hazing, then you can stay here, you can. We'll divide stores with you, man for man; and I'll give my affy-davy, as before, to speak the first ship I sight, and send 'em here to pick you up. Now you'll own that's talking. Handsomer you couldn't look to get, not you. And I hope"—raising his voice —"that all hands in this here block-house will overhaul my words, for what is spoke to one is spoke to all."

Captain Smollett rose from his seat, and knocked out the ashes of his pipe in the palm of his left hand.

"Is that all?" he asked.

"Every last word, by thunder!" answered John. "Refuse that, and you've seen the last of me but musket-balls."

"Very good," said the captain. "Now you'll hear me. If you'll come up one by one, unarmed, I'll engage to clap you all in irons, and take you home to a fair trial in England. If you won't, my name is Alexander Smollett, I've flown my sovereign's colours, and I'll see you all to Davy Jones. You can't find the treasure. You can't sail the ship—there's not a man among

you fit to sail the ship. You can't fight us—Gray, there, got away from five of you. Your ship's in irons, Master Silver; you're on a lee shore, and so you'll find. I stand here and tell you so; and they're the last good words you'll get from me; for, in the name of heaven, I'll put a bullet in your back when next I meet you. Tramp, my lad. Bundle out of this, please, hand over hand, and double quick."

Silver's face was a picture; his eyes started in his head with wrath. He shook the fire out of his pipe.

"Give me a hand up!" he cried.

"Not I," returned the captain.

"Who'll give me a hand up?" he roared.

Not a man among us moved. Growling the foulest imprecations, he crawled along the sand till he got hold of the porch and could hoist himself again upon his crutch. Then he spat into the spring.

"There!" he cried, "that's what I think of ye. Before an hour's out, I'll stove in your old block-house like a rum puncheon. Laugh, by thunder, laugh! Before an hour's out, ye'll laugh upon the other side. Them that die'll be the lucky ones."

And with a dreadful oath he stumbled off, ploughed down the sand, was helped across the stockade, after four or five failures, by the man with the flag of truce, and disappeared in an instant afterwards among the trees.

CHAPTER XXI

THE ATTACK

AS soon as Silver disappeared, the captain, who had been closely watching him, turned towards the interior of the house, and found not a man of us at his post but Gray. It was the first time we had ever seen him angry.

"Quarters!" he roared. And then, as we all slunk back to our places, "Gray," he said, "I'll put your name in the log; you've stood by your duty like a seaman. Mr. Trelawney, I'm surprised at you, sir. Doctor, I thought you had worn the king's coat! If that was how you served at Fontenoy, sir, you'd have been better in your berth."

The doctor's watch were all back at their loopholes, the rest were busy loading the spare muskets, and every one with a red face, you may be certain, and a flea in his ear, as the saying is.

The captain looked on for a while in silence. Then he spoke.

"My lads," said he, "I've given Silver a broadside. I pitched it in red-hot on purpose; and before the hour's out, as he said, we shall

be boarded. We're outnumbered, I needn't tell you that, but we fight in shelter; and, a minute ago, I should have said we fought with discipline. I've no manner of doubt that we can drub them, if you choose."

Then he went the rounds, and saw, as he said, that all was clear.

On the two short sides of the house, east and west, there were only two loopholes; on the south side where the porch was, two again; and on the north side five. There was a round score of muskets for the seven of us; the firewood had been built into four piles—tables, you might say—one about the middle of each side, and on each of these tables some ammunition and four loaded muskets were laid ready to the hand of the defenders. In the middle, the cutlasses lay ranged.

"Toss out the fire," said the captain; "the chill is past, and we mustn't have smoke in our eyes."

The iron fire basket was carried bodily out by Mr. Trelawney, and the embers smothered among sand.

"Hawkins hasn't had his breakfast. Hawkins, help yourself, and back to your post to eat it," continued Captain Smollett. "Lively, now, my lad; you'll want it before you've done. Hunter, serve out a round of brandy to all hands."

And while this was going on, the captain

completed, in his own mind, the plan of the defence.

"Doctor, you will take the door," he resumed. "See, and don't expose yourself; keep within, and fire through the porch.—Hunter, take the east side, there.—Joyce, you stand by the west, my man. Mr. Trelawney, you are the best shot—you and Gray will take this long north side, with the five loopholes; it's there the danger is. If they can get up to it, and fire in upon us through our own ports, things would begin to look dirty.—Hawkins, neither you nor I are much account at the shooting; we'll stand by to load and bear a hand."

As the captain had said, the chill was past. As soon as the sun had climbed above our girdle of trees, it fell with all its force upon the clearing, and drank up the vapours at a draught. Soon the sand was baking, and the resin melting in the logs of the block-house. Jackets and coats were flung aside; shirts thrown open at the neck, and rolled up to the shoulders; and we stood there, each at his post, in a fever of heat and anxiety.

An hour passed away.

"Hang them!" said the captain. "This is as dull as the doldrums.—Gray, whistle for a wind."

And just at that moment came the first news of the attack.

"If you please, sir," said Joyce, "if I see any one am I to fire?"

"I told you so!" cried the captain.

"Thank you, sir," returned Joyce, with the same quiet civility.

Nothing followed for a time; but the remark had set us all on the alert, straining ears and eyes—the musketeers with their pieces balanced in their hands, the captain out in the middle of the block-house, with his mouth very tight and a frown on his face.

So some seconds passed, till suddenly Joyce whipped up his musket and fired. The report had scarcely died away ere it was repeated and repeated from without in a scattering volley, shot behind shot, like a string of geese, from every side of the enclosure. Several bullets struck the log-house, but not one entered; and, as the smoke cleared away and vanished, the stockade and the woods around it looked as quiet and empty as before. Not a bough waved, not the gleam of a musket-barrel betrayed the presence of our foes.

"Did you hit your man?" asked the captain.

"No, sir," replied Joyce. "I believe not, sir."

"Next best thing to tell the truth," muttered Captain Smollett. "Load his gun, Hawkins. How many should you say there were on your side, doctor?"

"I know precisely," said Dr. Livesey. "Three shots were fired on this side. I saw the three flashes—two close together—one farther to the west."

"Three!" repeated the captain. "And how many on yours, Mr. Trelawney?"

But this was not so easily answered. There had come many from the north—seven, by the squire's computation; eight or nine, according to Gray. From the east and west only a single shot had been fired. It was plain, therefore, that the attack would be developed from the north, and that on the other three sides we were only to be annoyed by a show of hostilities. But Captain Smollett made no change in his arrangements. If the mutineers succeeded in crossing the stockade, he argued, they would take possession of any unprotected loophole, and shoot us down like rats in our own stronghold.

Nor had we much time left to us for thought. Suddenly, with a loud huzza, a little cloud of pirates leaped from the woods on the north side, and ran straight on the stockade. At the same moment, the fire was once more opened from the woods, and a rifle ball sang through the doorway, and knocked the doctor's musket into bits.

The boarders swarmed over the fence like monkeys. Squire and Gray fired again and yet again; three men fell, one forwards into the enclosure, two back on the outside. But of these, one was evidently more frightened than hurt, for he was on his feet again in a crack, and instantly disappeared among the trees.

Two had bit the dust, one had fled, four had

made good their footing inside our defences; while from the shelter of the woods seven or eight men, each evidently supplied with several muskets, kept up a hot though useless fire on the log-house.

The four who had boarded made straight before them for the building, shouting as they ran, and the men among the trees shouted back to encourage them. Several shots were fired; but, such was the hurry of the marksmen, not one appears to have taken effect. In a moment, the four pirates had swarmed up the mound and were upon us.

The head of Job Anderson, the boatswain, appeared at the middle loophole.

"At 'em, all hands—all hands!" he roared, in a voice of thunder.

At the same moment, another pirate grasped Hunter's musket by the muzzle, wrenched it from his hands, plucked it through the loophole, and, with one stunning blow, laid the poor fellow senseless on the floor. Meanwhile a third, running unharmed all round the house, appeared suddenly in the doorway, and fell with his cutlass on the doctor.

Our position was utterly reversed. A moment since we were firing, under cover, at an exposed enemy; now it was we who lay uncovered, and could not return a blow.

The log-house was full of smoke, to which we owed our comparative safety. Cries and con-

fusion, the flashes and reports of pistol shots, and one loud groan, rang in my ears.

"Out, lads, out, and fight 'em in the open! Cutlasses!" cried the captain.

I snatched a cutlass from the pile, and some one, at the same time snatching another, gave me a cut across the knuckles which I hardly felt. I dashed out of the door into the clear sunlight. Some one was close behind, I knew not whom. Right in front, the doctor was pursuing his assailant down the hill, and, just as my eyes fell upon him, beat down his guard, and sent him sprawling on his back, with a great slash across the face.

"Round the house, lads! round the house!" cried the captain; and even in the hurly-burly I perceived a change in his voice.

Mechanically, I obeyed, turned eastwards, and with my cutlass raised, ran round the corner of the house. Next moment I was face to face with Anderson. He roared aloud, and his hanger went up above his head, flashing in the sunlight. I had not time to be afraid, but, as the blow still hung impending, leaped in a trice upon one side, and missing my foot in the soft sand, rolled headlong down the slope.

When I had first sallied from the door, the other mutineers had been already swarming up the palisade to make an end of us. One man, in a red night-cap, with his cutlass in his mouth, had even got upon the top and thrown

a leg across. Well, so short had been the interval, that when I found my feet again all was in the same posture, the fellow with the red night-cap still half way over, another still just showing his head above the top of the stockade. And yet, in this breath of time, the fight was over, and the victory was ours.

Gray, following close behind me, had cut down the big boatswain ere he had time to recover from his lost blow. Another had been shot at a loophole in the very act of firing into the house, and now lay in agony, the pistol still smoking in his hand. A third, as I had seen, the doctor had disposed of at a blow. Of the four who had scaled the palisade, one only remained unaccounted for, and he, having left his cutlass on the field, was now clambering out again with the fear of death upon him.

"Fire—fire from the house!" cried the doctor. "And you, lads, back into cover."

But his words were unheeded, no shot was fired, and the last boarder made good his escape, and disappeared with the rest into the wood. In three seconds nothing remained of the attacking party but the five who had fallen, four on the inside, and one on the outside, of the palisade.

The doctor and Gray and I ran full speed for shelter. The survivors would soon be back where they had left their muskets, and at any moment the fire might recommence.

The house was by this time somewhat cleared

of smoke, and we saw at a glance the price we had paid for victory. Hunter lay beside his loophole, stunned; Joyce by his, shot through the head, never to move again; while right in the centre, the squire was supporting the captain, one as pale as the other.

"The captain's wounded," said Mr. Trelawney.

"Have they run?" asked Mr. Smollett.

"All that could, you may be bound," returned the doctor; "but there's five of them will never run again."

"Five!" cried the captain. "Come, that's better. Five against three leaves us four to nine. That's better odds than we had at starting. We were seven to nineteen then, or thought we were, and that's as bad to bear."*

*The mutineers were soon only eight in number, for the man shot by Mr. Trelawney on board the schooner died that same evening of his wound. But this was, of course, not known till after by the faithful party.

PART V

MY SEA ADVENTURE

CHAPTER XXII

HOW I BEGAN MY SEA ADVENTURE

THERE was no return of the mutineers—not so much as another shot out of the woods. They had "got their rations for that day" as the captain put it, and we had the place to ourselves and a quiet time to overhaul the wounded and get dinner. Squire and I cooked outside in spite of the danger, and even outside we could hardly tell what we were at, for horror of the loud groans that reached us from the doctor's patients.

Out of the eight men who had fallen in the action, only three still breathed—that one of the pirates who had been shot at the loophole, Hunter, and Captain Smollett; and of these the two were as good as dead; the mutineer, indeed, died under the doctor's knife, and Hunter, do what we could, never recovered consciousness in this world. He lingered all day, breathing loudly like the old buccaneer at home in his apoplectic fit; but the bones of his chest had been crushed by the blow and his skull fractured in falling, and some time in the following

night, without sign or sound, he went to his Maker.

As for the captain, his wounds were grievous indeed, but not dangerous. No organ was fatally injured. Anderson's ball—for it was Job that shot him first—had broken his shoulder-blade and touched the lung, not badly; the second had only torn and displaced some muscles in the calf. He was sure to recover, the doctor said, but, in the meantime and for weeks to come, he must not walk nor move his arm, nor so much as speak when he could help it.

My own accidental cut across the knuckles was a flea-bite. Dr. Livesey patched it up with plaster, and pulled my ears for me into the bargain.

After dinner the squire and the doctor sat by the captain's side a while in consultation; and when they had talked to their hearts' content, it being then a little past noon, the doctor took up his hat and pistols, girt on a cutlass, put the chart in his pocket, and with a musket over his shoulder, crossed the palisade on the north side, and set off briskly through the trees.

Gray and I were sitting together at the far end of the block-house, to be out of earshot of our officers consulting; and Gray took his pipe out of his mouth and fairly forgot to put it back again, so thunderstruck he was at this occurrence.

"Why, in the name of Davy Jones," said he, "is Dr. Livesey mad?"

"Why, no," says I. "He's about the last of this crew for that, I take it."

"Well, shipmate," said Gray, "mad he may not be; but if *he's* not, you mark my words, *I* am."

"I take it," replied I, "the doctor has his idea; and if I am right, he's going now to see Ben Gunn."

I was right, as appeared later; but, in the meantime, the house being stifling hot, and the little patch of sand inside the palisade ablaze with mid-day sun, I began to get another thought into my head, which was not by any means so right. What I began to do was to envy the doctor, walking in the cool shadow of the woods, with the birds about him, and the pleasant smell of the pines, while I sat grilling, with my clothes stuck to the hot resin, and so much blood about me, and so many poor dead bodies lying all around, that I took a disgust of the place that was almost as strong as fear.

All the time I was washing out the block-house, and then washing up the things from dinner, this disgust and envy kept growing stronger and stronger, till at last, being near a bread-bag, and no one then observing me, I took the first step towards my escapade, and filled both pockets of my coat with biscuit.

I was a fool, if you like, and certainly I was going to do a foolish, over-bold act; but I was determined to do it with all the precautions in

my power. These biscuits, should anything befall me, would keep me, at least, from starving till far on in the next day.

The next thing I laid hold of was a brace of pistols, and as I already had a powder-horn and bullets, I felt myself well supplied with arms.

As for the scheme I had in my head, it was not a bad one in itself. I was to go down the sandy spit that divides the anchorage on the east from the open sea, find the white rock I had observed last evening, and ascertain whether it was there or not that Ben Gunn had hidden his boat; a thing quite worth doing, as I still believe. But as I was certain I should not be allowed to leave the enclosure, my only plan was to take French leave, and slip out when nobody was watching; and that was so bad a way of doing it as made the thing itself wrong. But I was only a boy, and I had made my mind up.

Well, as things at last fell out, I found an admirable opportunity. The squire and Gray were busy helping the captain with his bandages; the coast was clear; I made a bolt for it over the stockade and into the thickest of the trees, and before my absence was observed I was out of cry of my companions.

This was my second folly, far worse than the first, as I left but two sound men to guard the house; but like the first, it was a help towards saving all of us.

I took my way straight for the east coast of

the island, for I was determined to go down the sea side of the spit to avoid all chance of observation from the anchorage. It was already late in the afternoon, although still warm and sunny. As I continued to thread the tall woods I could hear from far before me not only the continuous thunder of the surf, but a certain tossing of foliage and grinding of boughs which showed me the sea breeze had set in higher than usual. Soon cool draughts of air began to reach me; and a few steps farther I came forth into the open borders of the grove, and saw the sea lying blue and sunny to the horizon, and the surf tumbling and tossing its foam along the beach.

I have never seen the sea quiet round Treasure Island. The sun might blaze overhead, the air be without a breath, the surface smooth and blue, but still these great rollers would be running along all the external coast, thundering and thundering by day and night; and I scarce believe there is one spot in the island where a man would be out of earshot of their noise.

I walked along beside the surf with great enjoyment till, thinking I was now got far enough to the south, I took the cover of some thick bushes, and crept warily up to the ridge of the spit.

Behind me was the sea, in front the anchorage. The sea breeze, as though it had the sooner blown itself out by its unusual violence, was already at an end; it had been succeeded by light,

variable airs from the south and southeast, carrying great banks of fog; and the anchorage, under lee of Skeleton Island, lay still and leaden as when first we entered it. The *Hispaniola*, in that unbroken mirror, was exactly portrayed from the truck to the water-line, the Jolly Roger hanging from her peak.

Alongside lay one of the gigs, Silver in the stern-sheets—him I could always recognise—while a couple of men were leaning over the stern bulwarks, one of them with a red cap—the very rogue that I had seen some hours before stride-legs upon the palisade. Apparently they were talking and laughing, though at that distance—upwards of a mile—I could, of course, hear no word of what was said. All at once, there began the most horrid, unearthly screaming, which at first startled me badly, though I had soon remembered the voice of Captain Flint, and even thought I could make out the bird by her bright plumage as she sat perched upon her master's wrist.

Soon after the jolly-boat shoved off and pulled for shore, and the man with the red cap and his comrade went below by the cabin companion.

Just about the same time the sun had gone down behind the Spy-glass, and as the fog was collecting rapidly, it began to grow dark in earnest. I saw I must lose no time if I were to find the boat that evening.

The white rock, visible enough above the

brush, was still some eighth of a mile further down the spit, and it took me a goodish while to get up with it, crawling, often on all fours, among the scrub. Night had almost come when I laid my hand on its rough sides. Right below it there was an exceedingly small hollow of green turf, hidden by banks and a thick underwood about knee-deep, that grew there very plentifully; and in the centre of the dell, sure enough, a little tent of goat-skins, like what the gipsies carry about with them in England.

I dropped into the hollow, lifted the side of the tent, and there was Ben Gunn's boat—home-made if ever anything was home-made: a rude, lop-sided framework of tough wood, and stretched upon that a covering of goat-skin with the hair inside. The thing was extremely small, even for me, and I can hardly imagine that it could have floated with a full-sized man. There was one thwart set as low as possible, a kind of stretcher in the bows, and a double paddle for propulsion.

I had not then seen a coracle, such as the ancient Britons made, but I have seen one since, and I can give you no fairer idea of Ben Gunn's boat than by saying it was like the first and the worst coracle ever made by man. But the great advantage of the coracle it certainly possessed, for it was exceedingly light and portable.

Well, now that I had found the boat, you

would have thought I had had enough of truantry for once; but, in the meantime, I had taken another notion, and become so obstinately fond of it, that I would have carried it out, I believe, in the teeth of Captain Smollett himself. This was to slip out under cover of the night, cut the *Hispaniola* adrift, and let her go ashore where she fancied. I had quite made up my mind that the mutineers, after their repulse of the morning, had nothing nearer their hearts than to up anchor and away to sea; this, I thought, it would be a fine thing to prevent, and now that I had seen how they left their watchmen unprovided with a boat, I thought it might be done with little risk.

Down I sat to wait for darkness, and made a hearty meal of biscuit. It was a night out of ten thousand for my purpose. The fog had now buried all heaven. As the last rays of daylight dwindled and disappeared, absolute blackness settled down on Treasure Island. And when, at last, I shouldered the coracle, and groped my way stumblingly out of the hollow where I had supped, there were but two points visible on the whole anchorage.

One was the great fire on shore, by which the defeated pirates lay carousing in the swamp. The other, a mere blur of light upon the darkness, indicated the position of the anchored ship. She had swung round to the ebb—her bow was now towards me—the only lights on board were

in the cabin; and what I saw was merely a reflection on the fog of the strong rays that flowed from the stern window.

The ebb had already run some time, and I had to wade through a long belt of swampy sand, where I sank several times above the ankle, before I came to the edge of the retreating water, and wading a little way in, with some strength and dexterity, set my coracle, keel downwards, on the surface.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE EBB-TIDE RUNS

THE coracle—as I had ample reason to know before I was done with her—was a very safe boat for a person of my height and weight, both buoyant and clever in a seaway; but she was the most cross-grained lop-sided craft to manage. Do as you pleased, she always made more leeway than anything else, and turning round and round was the manœuvre she was best at. Even Ben Gunn himself has admitted that she was "queer to handle till you knew her way."

Certainly I did not know her way. She turned in every direction but the one I was bound to go; the most part of the time we were broadside on, and I am very sure I never should have made the ship at all but for the tide. By good fortune, paddle as I pleased, the tide was still sweeping me down; and there lay the *Hispaniola* right in the fair way, hardly to be missed.

First she loomed before me like a blot of something yet blacker than darkness, then her spars

and hull began to take shape, and the next moment, as it seemed (for, the further I went, the brisker grew the current of the ebb), I was alongside of her hawser, and had laid hold.

The hawser was as taut as a bowstring, and the current so strong she pulled upon her anchor. All round the hull, in the blackness, the rippling current bubbled and chattered like a little mountain stream. One cut with my sea-gully, and the *Hispaniola* would go humming down the tide.

So far so good; but it next occurred to my recollection that a taut hawser, suddenly cut, is a thing as dangerous as a kicking horse. Ten to one, if I were so foolhardy as to cut the *Hispaniola* from her anchor, I and the coracle would be knocked clean out of the water.

This brought me to a full stop, and if fortune had not again particularly favoured me, I should have had to abandon my design. But the light airs which had begun blowing from the southeast and south had hauled round after nightfall into the southwest. Just while I was meditating, a puff came, caught the *Hispaniola*, and forced her up into the current; and to my great joy, I felt the hawser slacken in my grasp, and the hand by which I held it dip for a second under water.

With that I made my mind up, took out my gully, opened it with my teeth, and cut one strand after another, till the vessel swung only

by two. Then I lay quiet, waiting to sever these last when the strain should be once more lightened by a breath of wind.

All this time I had heard the sound of loud voices from the cabin; but, to say truth, my mind had been so entirely taken up with other thoughts that I had scarcely given ear. Now, however, when I had nothing else to do, I began to pay more heed.

One I recognised for the coxswain's, Israel Hands, that had been Flint's gunner in former days. The other was, of course, my friend of the red night-cap. Both men were plainly the worse of drink, and they were still drinking; for, even while I was listening, one of them, with a drunken cry, opened the stern window and threw out something, which I divined to be an empty bottle. But they were not only tipsy; it was plain that they were furiously angry. Oaths flew like hailstones, and every now and then there came forth such an explosion as I thought was sure to end in blows. But each time the quarrel passed off, and the voices grumbled lower for a while, until the next crisis came, and, in its turn, passed away without result.

On shore, I could see the glow of the great camp fire burning warmly through the shore-side trees. Some one was singing, a dull, old, droning sailor's song, with a droop and a quaver at the end of every verse, and seemingly no end

to it at all but the patience of the singer. I had heard it on the voyage more than once, and remembered these words:—

> "But one man of her crew alive,
> What put to sea with seventy-five."

And I thought it was a ditty rather too dolefully appropriate for a company that had met such cruel losses in the morning. But, indeed, from what I saw, all these buccaneers were as callous as the sea they sailed on.

At last the breeze came; the schooner sidled and drew nearer in the dark; I felt the hawser slacken once more, and with a good tough effort, cut the last fibres through.

The breeze had but little action on the coracle, and I was almost instantly swept against the bows of the *Hispaniola*. At the same time the schooner began to turn upon her heel, spinning slowly, end for end, across the current.

I wrought like a fiend, for I expected every moment to be swamped; and since I found I could not push the coracle directly off, I now shoved straight astern. At length I was clear of my dangerous neighbour; and just as I gave the last impulsion, my hands came across a light cord that was trailing overboard across the stern bulwarks. Instantly I grasped it.

Why I should have done so I can hardly say. It was at first mere instinct; but once I had it in my hands and found it fast, curiosity began to

get the upper hand, and I determined I should have one look through the cabin window.

I pulled in hand over hand on the cord, and, when I judged myself near enough, rose at infinite risk to about half my height, and thus commanded the roof and a slice of the interior of the cabin.

By this time the schooner and her little consort were gliding pretty swiftly through the water; indeed, we had already fetched up level with the camp fire. The ship was talking, as sailors say, loudly, treading the innumerable ripples with an incessant weltering splash; and until I got my eye above the window-sill I could not comprehend why the watchmen had taken no alarm. One glance, however, was sufficient; and it was only one glance that I durst take from that unsteady skiff. It showed me Hands and his companion locked together in deadly wrestle, each with a hand upon the other's throat.

I dropped upon the thwart again, none too soon, for I was near overboard. I could see nothing for the moment, but these two furious, encrimsoned faces, swaying together under the smoky lamp; and I shut my eyes to let them grow once more familiar with the darkness.

The endless ballad had come to an end at last, and the whole diminished company about the camp fire had broken into the chorus I had heard so often:—

THE EBB-TIDE RUNS

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil had done for the rest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

I was just thinking how busy drink and the devil were at that very moment in the cabin of the *Hispaniola*, when I was surprised by a sudden lurch of the coracle. At the same moment she yawed sharply and seemed to change her course. The speed in the meantime had strangely increased.

I opened my eyes at once. All round me were little ripples, combing over with a sharp, bristling sound and slightly phosphorescent. The *Hispaniola* herself, a few yards in whose wake I was still being whirled along, seemed to stagger in her course, and I saw her spars toss a little against the blackness of the night; nay, as I looked longer, I made sure she also was wheeling to the southward.

I glanced over my shoulder, and my heart jumped against my ribs. There, right behind me, was the glow of the camp fire. The current had turned at right angles, sweeping round along with it the tall schooner and the little dancing coracle; ever quickening, ever bubbling higher, ever muttering louder, it went spinning through the narrows for the open sea.

Suddenly the schooner in front of me gave a violent yaw, turning, perhaps, through twenty degrees; and almost at the same moment one

shout followed another from on board; I could hear feet pounding on the companion ladder; and I knew that the two drunkards had at last been interrupted in their quarrel and awakened to a sense of their disaster.

I lay down flat in the bottom of that wretched skiff, and devoutly recommended my spirit to its Maker. At the end of the straits, I made sure we must fall into some bar of raging breakers, where all my troubles would be ended speedily; and though I could, perhaps, bear to die, I could not bear to look upon my fate as it approached.

So I must have lain for hours, continually beaten to and fro upon the billows, now and again wetted with flying sprays, and never ceasing to expect death at the next plunge. Gradually weariness grew upon me; a numbness, an occasional stupor, fell upon my mind even in the midst of my terrors; until sleep at last supervened, and in my sea-tossed coracle I lay and dreamed of home and the old "Admiral Benbow."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CRUISE OF THE CORACLE

IT was broad day when I awoke, and found myself tossing at the south-west end of Treasure Island. The sun was up, but was still hid from me behind the great bulk of the Spy-glass, which on this side descended almost to the sea in formidable cliffs.

Haulbowline Head and Mizzen-mast Hill were at my elbow; the hill bare and dark, the head bound with cliffs forty or fifty feet high, and fringed with great masses of fallen rock. I was scarce a quarter of a mile to seaward, and it was my first thought to paddle in and land.

That notion was soon given over. Among the fallen rocks the breakers spouted and bellowed; loud reverberations, heavy sprays flying and falling, succeeded one another from second to second; and I saw myself, if I ventured nearer, dashed to death upon the rough shore, or spending my strength in vain to scale the beetling crags.

Nor was that all; for crawling together on flat tables of rock, or letting themselves drop

into the sea with loud reports, I beheld huge slimy monsters—soft snails, as it were, of incredible bigness—two or three score of them together, making the rocks to echo with their barkings.

I have understood since that they were sea lions, and entirely harmless. But the look of them, added to the difficulty of the shore and the high running of the surf, was more than enough to disgust me of that landing place. I felt willing rather to starve at sea than to confront such perils.

In the meantime I had a better chance, as I supposed, before me. North of Haulbowline Head, the land runs in a long way, leaving, at low tide, a long stretch of yellow sand. To the north of that, again, there comes another cape—Cape of the Woods, as it was marked upon the chart—buried in tall green pines, which descended to the margin of the sea.

I remembered what Silver had said about the current that sets northward along the whole west coast of Treasure Island; and seeing from my position that I was already under its influence, I preferred to leave Haulbowline Head behind me, and reserve my strength for an attempt to land upon the kindlier-looking Cape of the Woods.

There was a great, smooth swell upon the sea. The wind blowing steady and gentle from the south, there was no contrariety between that

and the current, and the billows rose and fell unbroken.

Had it been otherwise, I must long ago have perished; but as it was, it is surprising how easily and securely my little and light boat could ride. Often, as I still lay at the bottom and kept no more than an eye above the gunwale, I would see a big blue summit heaving close above me; yet the coracle would but bounce a little, dance as if on springs, and subside on the other side into the trough as lightly as a bird.

I began after a little to grow very bold, and sat up to try my skill at paddling, but even a small change in the disposition of the weight will produce violent changes in the behaviour of a coracle. And I had hardly moved before the boat, giving up at once her gentle dancing movement, ran straight down a slope of water so steep that it made me giddy, and struck her nose, with a spout of spray, deep into the side of the next wave.

I was drenched and terrified, and fell instantly back into my old position, whereupon the coracle seemed to find her head again, and led me as softly as before among the billows. It was plain she was not to be interfered with, and at that rate, since I could in no way influence her course, what hope had I left of reaching land?

I began to be horribly frightened, but I kept my head, for all that. First, moving with all

care, I gradually baled out the coracle with my sea-cap; then getting my eye once more above the gunwale, I set myself to study how it was she managed to slip so quietly through the rollers.

I found each wave, instead of the big, smooth glossy mountain it looks from shore, or from a vessel's deck, was for all the world like any range of hills on the dry land, full of peaks and smooth places and valleys. The coracle, left to herself, turning from side to side, threaded, so to speak, her way through these lower parts, and avoided the steep slopes and higher, toppling summits of the wave.

"Well, now," thought I to myself, "it is plain I must lie where I am, and not disturb the balance; but it is plain, also, that I can put the paddle over the side, and from time to time, in smooth places, give her a shove or two towards land." No sooner thought upon than done. There I lay on my elbows, in the most trying attitude, and every now and again gave a weak stroke or two to turn her head to shore.

It was very tiring, and slow work, yet I did visibly gain ground; and, as we drew near the Cape of the Woods, though I saw I must infallibly miss that point, I had still made some hundred yards of easting. I was, indeed, close in. I could see the cool green tree-tops swaying together in the breeze, and I felt sure I should make the next promontory without fail.

It was high time, for I now began to be tor-

tured with thirst. The glow of the sun from above, its thousand-fold reflection from the waves, the sea-water that fell and dried upon me, caking my very lips with salt, combined to make my throat burn and my brain ache. The sight of the trees so near at hand had almost made me sick with longing; but the current had soon carried me past the point; and, as the next reach of sea opened out, I beheld a sight that changed the nature of my thoughts.

Right in front of me, not a half mile away, I beheld the *Hispaniola* under sail. I made sure, of course, that I should be taken; but I was so distressed for want of water, that I scarce knew whether to be glad or sorry at the thought; and, long before I had come to a conclusion, surprise had taken entire possession of my mind, and I could do nothing but stare and wonder.

The *Hispaniola* was under her main-sail and two jibs, and the beautiful white canvas shone in the sun like snow or silver. When I first sighted her, all her sails were drawing; she was laying a course about northwest; and I presumed the men on board were going round the island on their way back to the anchorage. Presently she began to fetch more and more to the westward, so that I thought they had sighted me and were going about in chase. At last, however, she fell right into the wind's eye, was taken dead aback, and stood there a while helpless, with her sails shivering.

"Clumsy fellows," said I; "they must still be drunk as owls." And I thought how Captain Smollett would have set them skipping.

Meanwhile the schooner gradually fell off, and filled again upon another tack, sailed swiftly for a minute or so, and brought up once more dead in the wind's eye. Again and again was this repeated. To and fro, up and down, north, south, east, and west, the *Hispaniola* sailed by swoops and dashes, and at each repetition ended as she had begun, with idly flapping canvas. It became plain to me that nobody was steering. And, if so, where were the men? Either they were dead drunk, or had deserted her, I thought, and perhaps if I could get on board, I might return the vessel to her captain.

The current was bearing coracle and schooner southward at an equal rate. As for the latter's sailing, it was so wild and intermittent, and she hung each time so long in irons, that she certainly gained nothing, if she did not even lose. If only I dared to sit up and paddle, I made sure that I could overhaul her. The scheme had an air of adventure that inspired me, and the thought of the water-breaker beside the fore companion doubled my growing courage.

Up I got, was welcomed almost instantly by another cloud of spray, but this time stuck to my purpose; and set myself, with all my strength and caution, to paddle after the unsteered *Hispaniola*. Once I shipped a sea so heavy

that I had to stop and bail, with my heart fluttering like a bird; but gradually I got into the way of the thing, and guided my coracle among the waves, with only now and then a blow upon her bows and a dash of foam in my face.

I was now gaining rapidly on the schooner; I could see the brass glisten on the tiller as it banged about; and still no soul appeared upon her decks. I could not choose but suppose she was deserted. If not, the men were lying drunk below, where I might batten them down, perhaps, and do what I chose with the ship.

For some time she had been doing the worst thing possible for me—standing still. She headed nearly due south, yawing, of course, all the time. Each time she fell off her sails partly filled, and these brought her, in a moment, right to the wind again. I have said this was the worst thing possible for me; for helpless as she looked in this situation, with the canvas cracking like cannon, and the blocks trundling and banging on the deck, she still continued to run away from me, not only with the speed of the current, but by the whole amount of her leeway, which was naturally great.

But now, at last, I had my chance. The breeze fell, for some seconds, very low, and the current gradually turning her, the *Hispaniola* revolved slowly round her centre, and at last presented me her stern, with the cabin window still gaping open, and the lamp over the table

still burning on into the day. The main-sail hung drooped like a banner. She was stock-still, but for the current.

For the last little while I had even lost; but now, redoubling my efforts, I began once more to overhaul the chase.

I was not a hundred yards from her when the wind came again in a clap; she filled on the port tack, and was off again, stooping and skimming like a swallow.

My first impulse was one of despair, but my second was towards joy. Round she came, till she was broadside on to me—round still till she had covered a half, and then two thirds, and then three quarters of the distance that separated us. I could see the waves boiling white under her forefoot. Immensely tall she looked to me from my low station in the coracle.

And then, of a sudden, I began to comprehend. I had scarce time to think—scarce time to act and save myself. I was on the summit of one swell when the schooner came stooping over the next. The bowsprit was over my head. I sprang to my feet, and leaped, stamping the coracle under water. With one hand I caught the jib-boom, while my foot was lodged between the stay and the brace; and as I still clung there panting, a dull blow told me that the schooner had charged down upon and struck the coracle, and that I was left without retreat on the *Hispaniola*.

CHAPTER XXV

I STRIKE THE JOLLY ROGER

I HAD scarce gained a position on the bowsprit, when the flying jib flapped and filled upon the other tack, with a report like a gun. The schooner trembled to her keel under the reverse; but next moment, the other sails still drawing, the jib flapped back again, and hung idle.

This had nearly tossed me off into the sea; and now I lost no time, crawled back along the bowsprit, and tumbled head foremost on the deck.

I was on the lee side of the forecastle, and the main-sail, which was still drawing, concealed from me a certain portion of the after-deck. Not a soul was to be seen. The planks, which had not been swabbed since the mutiny, bore the print of many feet; and an empty bottle, broken by the neck, tumbled to and fro like a live thing in the scuppers.

Suddenly the *Hispaniola* came right into the wind. The jibs behind me cracked aloud; the rudder slammed to; the whole ship gave a sicken-

ing heave and shudder, and at the same moment the main-boom swung inboard, the sheet groaning in the blocks, and showed me the lee after-deck.

There were the two watchmen, sure enough: red-cap on his back, as stiff as a handspike, with his arms stretched out like those of a crucifix, and his teeth showing through his open lips; Israel Hands propped against the bulwarks, his chin on his chest, his hands lying open before him on the deck, his face as white, under its tan, as a tallow-candle.

For a while the ship kept bucking and sidling like a vicious horse, the sails filling, now on one tack, now on another, and the boom swinging to and fro till the mast groaned aloud under the strain. Now and again, too, there would come a cloud of light sprays over the bulwark, and a heavy blow of the ship's bows against the swell: so much heavier weather was made of it by this great rigged ship than by my home-made, lop-sided coracle, now gone to the bottom of the sea.

At every jump of the schooner, red-cap slipped to and fro; but—what was ghastly to behold—neither his attitude nor his fixed teeth-disclosing grin was anyway disturbed by this rough usage. At every jump, too, Hands appeared still more to sink into himself and settle down upon the deck, his feet sliding ever the farther out, and the whole body canting towards the stern, so

that his face became, little by little, hid from me; and at last I could see nothing beyond his ear and the frayed ringlet of one whisker.

At the same time, I observed, around both of them, splashes of dark blood upon the planks, and began to feel sure that they had killed each other in their drunken wrath.

While I was thus looking and wondering in a calm moment, when the ship was still, Israel Hands turned partly round, and, with a low moan, writhed himself back to the position in which I had seen him first. The moan, which told of pain and deadly weakness, and the way in which his jaw hung open, went right to my heart. But when I remembered the talk I had overheard from the apple barrel, all pity left me.

I walked aft until I reached the main-mast.

"Come aboard, Mr. Hands," I said, ironically.

He rolled his eyes round heavily; but he was too far gone to express surprise. All he could do was to utter one word: "Brandy."

It occurred to me there was no time to lose; and, dodging the boom as it once more lurched across the deck, I slipped aft, and down the companion stairs into the cabin.

It was such a scene of confusion as you can hardly fancy. All the lockfast places had been broken open in quest of the chart. The floor was thick with mud, where ruffians had sat down to drink or consult after wading in the marshes

round their camp. The bulkheads, all painted in clear white, and beaded round with gilt, bore a pattern of dirty hands. Dozens of empty bottles clinked together in corners to the rolling of the ship. One of the doctor's medical books lay open on the table, half of the leaves gutted out, I suppose, for pipelights. In the midst of all this the lamp still cast a smoky glow, obscure and brown as umber.

I went into the cellar; all the barrels were gone, and of the bottles a most surprising number had been drunk out and thrown away. Certainly, since the mutiny began, not a man of them could ever have been sober.

Foraging about, I found a bottle with some brandy left, for Hands; and for myself I routed out some biscuit, some pickled fruits, a great bunch of raisins, and a piece of cheese. With these I came on deck, put down my own stock behind the rudder head, and well out of the coxswain's reach, went forward to the water-breaker, and had a good, deep drink of water, and then, and not till then, gave Hands the brandy.

He must have drunk a gill before he took the bottle from his mouth.

"Aye," said he, "by thunder, but I wanted some o' that!"

I had sat down already in my own corner and begun to eat.

"Much hurt?" I asked him.

He grunted, or, rather, I might say, he barked.

"If that doctor was aboard," he said, "I'd be right enough in a couple of turns; but I don't have no manner of luck, you see, and that's what's the matter with me. As for that swab, he's good and dead, he is," he added, indicating the man with the red cap. "He warn't no seaman, anyhow. And where mought you have come from?"

"Well," said I, "I've come aboard to take possession of this ship, Mr. Hands; and you'll please regard me as your captain until further notice."

He looked at me sourly enough, but said nothing. Some of the colour had come back into his cheeks, though he still looked very sick, and still continued to slip out and settle down as the ship banged about.

"By-the-by," I continued, "I can't have these colours, Mr. Hands; and, by your leave, I'll strike 'em. Better none than these."

And, again dodging the boom, I ran to the colour lines, handed down their cursed black flag, and chucked it overboard.

"God save the king!" said I, waving my cap; "and there's an end to Captain Silver!"

He watched me keenly and slyly, his chin all the while on his breast.

"I reckon," he said at last—"I reckon, Cap'n Hawkins, you'll kind of want to get ashore, now. S'pose we talks."

"Why, yes," says I, "with all my heart, Mr. Hands. Say on." And I went back to my meal with a good appetite.

"This man," he began, nodding feebly at the corpse—"O'Brien were his name—a rank Irelander—this man and me got the canvas on her, meaning for to sail her back. Well, *he's* dead now, he is—as dead as bilge; and who's to sail this ship, I don't see. Without I gives you a hint, you ain't that man, as far's I can tell. Now, look here, you gives me food and drink, and a old scarf or ankecher to tie my wound up, you do; and I'll tell you how to sail her; and that's about square all round, I take it."

"I'll tell you one thing," says I: "I'm not going back to Captain Kidd's anchorage. I mean to get into North Inlet, and beach her quietly there."

"To be sure you did," he cried. "Why, I ain't sich an infernal lubber, after all. I can see, can't I? I've tried my fling, I have, and I've lost, and it's you has the wind of me. North Inlet? Why, I haven't no ch'ice, not I! I'd help you sail her up to Execution Dock, by thunder! so I would."

Well, as it seemed to me, there was some sense in this. We struck our bargain on the spot. In three minutes I had the *Hispaniola* sailing easily before the wind along the coast of Treasure Island, with good hopes of turning the northern point ere noon, and beating down again as far

as North Inlet before high water, when we might beach her safely, and wait till the subsiding tide permitted us to land.

Then I lashed the tiller and went below to my own chest, where I got a soft silk handkerchief of my mother's. With this, and with my aid, Hands bound up the great bleeding stab he had received in the thigh, and after he had eaten a little and had a swallow or two more of the brandy, he began to pick up visibly, sat straighter up, spoke louder and clearer, and looked in every way another man.

The breeze served us admirably. We skimmed before it like a bird, the coast of the island flashing by, and the view changing every minute. Soon we were past the high lands and bowling beside low, sandy country, sparsely dotted with dwarf pines, and soon we were beyond that again, and had turned the corner of the rocky hill that ends the island on the north.

I was greatly elated with my new command, and pleased with the bright, sunshiny weather and these different prospects of the coast. I had now plenty of water and good things to eat, and my conscience, which had smitten me hard for my desertion, was quieted by the great conquest I had made. I should, I think, have had nothing left me to desire but for the eyes of the coxswain as they followed me derisively about the deck, and the odd smile that appeared continually on his face. It was a smile that had

in it something both of pain and weakness—a haggard, old man's smile; but there was, besides that, a grain of derision, a shadow of treachery in his expression as he craftily watched, and watched, and watched me at my work.

CHAPTER XXVI

ISRAEL HANDS

THE wind, serving us to a desire, now hauled into the west. We could run so much the easier from the northeast corner of the island to the mouth of the North Inlet. Only, as we had no power to anchor, and dared not beach her till the tide had flowed a good deal farther, time hung on our hands. The coxswain told me how to lay the ship to; after a good many trials I succeeded, and we both sat in silence, over another meal.

"Cap'n," said he, at length, with that same uncomfortable smile, "here's my old shipmate, O'Brien; s'pose you was to heave him overboard. I ain't partic'lar as a rule, and I don't take no blame for settling his hash; but I don't reckon him ornamental, now, do you?"

"I'm not strong enough, and I don't like the job; and there he lies, for me," said I.

"This here's an unlucky ship—this *Hispaniola*, Jim," he went on, blinking. "There's a power of men been killed in this *Hispaniola*—a sight o' poor seamen dead and gone since you and me

took ship to Bristol. I never seen sich dirty luck, not I. There was this here O'Brien, now —he's dead, ain't he? Well, now, I'm no scholar, and you're a lad as can read and figure; and, to put it straight, do you take it as a dead man is dead for good, or do he come alive again?"

"You can kill the body, Mr. Hands, but not the spirit; you must know that already," I replied. "O'Brien there is in another world, and maybe watching us."

"Ah!" says he. "Well, that's unfort'nate—appears as if killing parties was a waste of time. Howsomever, sperrits don't reckon for much, by what I've seen. I'll chance it with the sperrits, Jim. And now, you've spoke up free, and I'll take it kind if you'd step down into that there cabin and get me a—well, a—shiver my timbers! I can't hit the name on 't; well, you get me a bottle of wine, Jim—this here brandy's too strong for my head."

Now, the coxswain's hesitation seemed to be unnatural; and as for the notion of his preferring wine to brandy, I entirely disbelieved it. The whole story was a pretext. He wanted me to leave the deck—so much was plain; but with what purpose I could in no way imagine. His eyes never met mine; they kept wandering to and fro, up and down, now with a look to the sky, now with a flitting glance upon the dead O'Brien. All the time he kept smiling, and putting his tongue out in the most guilty, embar-

rassed manner, so that a child could have told that he was bent on some deception. I was prompt with my answer, however, for I saw where my advantage lay; and that with a fellow so densely stupid I could easily conceal my suspicions to the end.

"Some wine?" I said. "Far better. Will you have white or red?"

"Well, I reckon it's about the blessed same to me, shipmate," he replied; "so it's strong, and plenty of it, what's the odds!"

"All right," I answered. "I'll bring you port, Mr. Hands. But I'll have to dig for it."

With that I scuttled down the companion with all the noise I could, slipped off my shoes, ran quietly along the sparred gallery, mounted the forecastle ladder, and popped my head out of the fore companion. I knew he would not expect to see me there; yet I took every precaution possible; and certainly the worst of my suspicions proved too true.

He had risen from his position to his hands and knees; and, though his leg obviously hurt him pretty sharply when he moved—for I could hear him stifle a groan—yet it was at a good, rattling rate that he trailed himself across the deck. In half a minute he had reached the port scuppers, and picked, out of a coil of rope, a long knife, or rather a short dirk, discoloured to the hilt with blood. He looked upon it for a moment, thrusting forth his under jaw, tried

the point upon his hand, and then, hastily concealing it in the bosom of his jacket, trundled back again into his old place against the bulwark.

This was all that I required to know. Israel could move about; he was now armed; and if he had been at so much trouble to get rid of me, it was plain that I was meant to be the victim. What he would do afterwards—whether he would try to crawl right across the island from North Inlet to the camp among the swamps, or whether he would fire Long Tom, trusting that his own comrades might come first to help him, was, of course, more than I could say.

Yet I felt sure that I could trust him in one point, since in that our interests jumped together, and that was in the disposition of the schooner. We both desired to have her stranded safe enough, in a sheltered place, and so that, when the time came, she could be got off again with as little labour and danger as might be; and until that was done I considered that my life would certainly be spared.

While I was thus turning the business over in my mind, I had not been idle with my body. I had stolen back to the cabin, slipped once more into my shoes, and laid my hand at random on a bottle of wine, and now, with this for an excuse, I made my re-appearance on the deck.

Hands lay as I had left him, all fallen together in a bundle, and with his eyelids lowered, as though he were too weak to bear the light. He

looked up, however, at my coming, knocked the neck off the bottle, like a man who had done the same thing often, and took a good swig, with his favourite toast of "Here's luck!" Then he lay quiet for a little, and then, pulling out a stick of tobacco, begged me to cut him a quid.

"Cut me a junk o' that," says he, "for I haven't no knife, and hardly strength enough, so be as I had. Ah, Jim, Jim, I reckon I've missed stays! Cut me a quid, as'll likely be the last, lad; for I'm for my long home, and no mistake."

"Well," said I, "I'll cut you some tobacco; but if I was you and thought myself so badly, I would go to my prayers, like a Christian man."

"Why?" said he. "Now, you tell me why."

"Why?" I cried. "You were asking me just now about the dead. You've broken your trust; you've lived in sin and lies and blood; there's a man you killed lying at your feet this moment; and you ask me why! For God's mercy, Mr. Hands, that's why."

I spoke with a little heat, thinking of the bloody dirk he had hidden in his pocket, and designed, in his ill thoughts, to end me with. He, for his part, took a great draught of the wine, and spoke with the most unusual solemnity.

"For thirty years," he said, "I've sailed the seas, and seen good and bad, better and worse, fair weather and foul, provisions running out,

knives going, and what not. Well, now I tell you, I never seen good come o' goodness yet. Him as strikes first is my fancy; dead men don't bite; them's my views—amen, so be it. And now, you look here," he added, suddenly changing his tone, "we've had about enough of this foolery. The tide's made good enough by now. You just take my orders, Cap'n Hawkins, and we'll sail slap in and be done with it."

All told, we had scarce two miles to run; but the navigation was delicate, the entrance to this northern anchorage was not only narrow and shoal, but lay east and west, so that the schooner must be nicely handled to be got in. I think I was a good, prompt subaltern, and am very sure that Hands was an excellent pilot; for we went about and about, and dodged in, shaving the banks, with a certainty and a neatness that were a pleasure to behold.

Scarcely had we passed the heads before the land closed around us. The shores of North Inlet were as thickly wooded as those of the southern anchorage; but the space was longer and narrower, and more like, what in truth it was, the estuary of a river. Right before us, at the southern end, we saw the wreck of a ship in the last stages of dilapidation. It had been a great vessel of three masts, but had lain so long exposed to the injuries of the weather, that it was hung about with great webs of dripping seaweed, and on the deck of it shore bushes

had taken root, and now flourished thick with flowers. It was a sad sight, but it showed us that the anchorage was calm.

"Now," said Hands, "look there; there's a pet bit for to beach a ship in. Fine flat sand, never a catspaw, trees all around of it, and flowers a-blowing like a garding on that old ship."

"And once beached," I inquired, "how shall we get her off again?"

"Why, so," he replied: "you take a line ashore there on the other side at low water: take a turn about one o' them big pines; bring it back, take a turn round the capstan, and lie-to for the tide. Come high water, all hands take a pull upon the line, and off she comes as sweet as natur'. And now, boy, you stand by. We're near the bit now, and she's too much way on her. Starboard a little—so—steady—starboard—larboard a little—steady—steady!"

So he issued his commands, which I breathlessly obeyed; till, all of a sudden, he cried, "Now, my hearty, luff!" And I put the helm hard up, and the *Hispaniola* swung round rapidly, and ran stem on for the low-wooded shore.

The excitement of these last manœuvres had somewhat interfered with the watch I had kept hitherto, sharply enough, upon the coxswain. Even then I was still so much interested, waiting for the ship to touch, that I had quite forgot the peril that hung over my head, and stood craning over the starboard bulwarks and

watching the ripples spreading wide before the bows. I might have fallen without a struggle for my life, had not a sudden disquietude seized upon me, and made me turn my head. Perhaps I had heard a creak, or seen his shadow moving with the tail of my eye; perhaps it was an instinct like a cat's; but, sure enough, when I looked round, there was Hands, already half-way towards me, with the dirk in his right hand.

We must both have cried out aloud when our eyes met; but while mine was the shrill cry of terror, his was a roar of fury like a charging bull's. At the same instant he threw himself forward, and I leaped sideways towards the bows. As I did so, I let go of the tiller, which sprang sharp to leeward; and I think this saved my life, for it struck Hands across the chest, and stopped him, for the moment, dead.

Before he could recover, I was safe out of the corner where he had me trapped, with all the deck to dodge about. Just forward of the main-mast I stopped, drew a pistol from my pocket, took a cool aim, though he had already turned and was once more coming directly after me, and drew the trigger. The hammer fell, but there followed neither flash nor sound; the priming was useless with sea water. I cursed myself for my neglect. Why had not I, long before, reprimed and reloaded my only weapons? Then I should not have been as now, a mere fleeing sheep before this butcher.

Wounded as he was, it was wonderful how fast he could move, his grizzled hair tumbling over his face, and his face itself as red as a red ensign with his haste and fury. I had no time to try my other pistol, nor, indeed, much inclination, for I was sure it would be useless. One thing I saw plainly: I must not simply retreat before him, or he would speedily hold me boxed into the bows, as a moment since he had so nearly boxed me in the stern. Once so caught, and nine or ten inches of the blood-stained dirk would be my last experience on this side of eternity. I placed my palms against the main-mast, which was of a goodish bigness, and waited, every nerve upon the stretch.

Seeing that I meant to dodge, he also paused; and a moment or two passed in feints on his part, and corresponding movements upon mine. It was such a game as I had often played at home about the rocks of Black Hill Cove; but never before, you may be sure, with such a wildly beating heart as now. Still, as I say, it was a boy's game, and I thought I could hold my own at it, against an elderly seaman with a wounded thigh. Indeed, my courage had begun to rise so high, that I allowed myself a few darting thoughts on what would be the end of the affair; and while I saw certainly that I could spin it out for long, I saw no hope of any ultimate escape.

Well, while things stood thus, suddenly the

Hispaniola struck, staggered, ground for an instant in the sand, and then, swift as a blow, canted over to the port side, till the deck stood at an angle of forty-five degrees, and about a puncheon of water splashed into the scupper holes, and lay, in a pool, between the deck and bulwark.

We were both of us capsized in a second, and both of us rolled, almost together, into the scuppers; the dead red-cap, with his arms still spread out, tumbling stiffly after us. So near were we, indeed, that my head came against the coxswain's foot with a crack that made my teeth rattle. Blow and all, I was the first afoot again; for Hands had got involved with the dead body. The sudden canting of the ship had made the deck no place for running on; I had to find some new way of escape, and that upon the instant, for my foe was almost touching me. Quick as thought, I sprang into the mizzen shrouds, rattled up hand over hand, and did not draw a breath till I was seated on the cross-trees.

I had been saved by being prompt; the dirk had struck not half a foot below me, as I pursued my upward flight; and there stood Israel Hands with his mouth open and his face upturned to mine, a perfect statue of surprise and disappointment.

Now that I had a moment to myself, I lost no time in changing the priming of my pistol, and then, having one ready for service, and to

make assurance doubly sure, I proceeded to draw the load of the other, and recharge it afresh from the beginning.

My new employment struck Hands all of a heap; he began to see the dice going against him; and after an obvious hesitation, he also hauled himself heavily into the shrouds, and, with the dirk in his teeth, began slowly and painfully to mount. It cost him no end of time and groans to haul his wounded leg behind him; and I had quietly finished my arrangements before he was much more than a third of the way up. Then, with a pistol in either hand, I addressed him.

"One more step, Mr. Hands," said I, "and I'll blow your brains out! Dead men don't bite, you know," I added, with a chuckle.

He stopped instantly. I could see by the working of his face that he was trying to think, and the process was so slow and laborious that, in my new-found security, I laughed aloud. At last, with a swallow or two, he spoke, his face still wearing the same expression of extreme perplexity. In order to speak he had to take the dagger from his mouth, but, in all else, he remained unmoved.

"Jim," says he, "I reckon we're fouled, you and me, and we'll have to sign articles. I'd have had you but for that there lurch: but I don't have no luck, not I; and I reckon I'll have to strike, which comes hard, you see, for a

master mariner to a ship's younker like you, Jim."

I was drinking in his words and smiling away, as conceited as a cock upon a wall, when, all in a breath, back went his right hand over his shoulder. Something sang like an arrow through the air; I felt a blow and then a sharp pang, and there I was pinned by the shoulder to the mast. In the horrid pain and surprise of the moment—I scarce can say it was by my own volition, and I am sure it was without a conscious aim—both my pistols went off, and both escaped out of my hands. They did not fall alone; with a choked cry, the coxswain loosed his grasp upon the shrouds, and plunged head first into the water.

CHAPTER XXVII

"PIECES OF EIGHT"

OWING to the cant of the vessel, the masts hung far out over the water, and from my perch on the cross-trees I had nothing below me but the surface of the bay. Hands, who was not so far up, was, in consequence, nearer to the ship, and fell between me and the bulwarks. He rose once to the surface in a lather of foam and blood, and then sank again for good. As the water settled, I could see him lying huddled together on the clean, bright sand in the shadow of the vessel's sides. A fish or two whipped past his body. Sometimes, by the quivering of the water, he appeared to move a little, as if he were trying to rise. But he was dead enough, for all that, being both shot and drowned, and was food for fish in the very place where he had designed my slaughter.

I was no sooner certain of this than I began to feel sick, faint, and terrified. The hot blood was running over my back and chest. The dirk, where it had pinned my shoulder to the mast, seemed to burn like a hot iron; yet it was

not so much these real sufferings that distressed me, for these, it seemed to me, I could bear without a murmur; it was the horror I had upon my mind of falling from the cross-trees into that still green water beside the body of the coxswain.

I clung with both hands till my nails ached, and I shut my eyes as if to cover up the peril. Gradually my mind came back again, my pulses quieted down to a more natural time, and I was once more in possession of myself.

It was my first thought to pluck forth the dirk; but either it stuck too hard or my nerve failed me; and I desisted with a violent shudder. Oddly enough, that very shudder did the business. The knife, in fact, had come the nearest in the world to missing me altogether; it held me by a mere pinch of skin, and this the shudder tore away. The blood ran down the faster, to be sure; but I was my own master again, and only tacked to the mast by my coat and shirt.

These last I broke through with a sudden jerk, and then regained the deck by the starboard shrouds. For nothing in the world would I have again ventured, shaken as I was, upon the overhanging port shrouds, from which Israel had so lately fallen.

I went below, and did what I could for my wound; it pained me a good deal, and still bled freely; but it was neither deep nor dangerous, nor did it greatly gall me when I used my arm.

Then I looked around me, and as the ship was now, in a sense, my own, I began to think of clearing it from its last passenger—the dead man, O'Brien.

He had pitched, as I have said, against the bulwarks, where he lay like some horrible, ungainly sort of puppet; life-size, indeed, but how different from life's colour or life's comeliness! In that position, I could easily have my way with him; and as the habit of tragical adventures had worn off almost all my terror for the dead, I took him by the waist as if he had been a sack of bran, and, with one good heave, tumbled him overboard. He went in with a sounding plunge; the red cap came off, and remained floating on the surface; and as soon as the splash subsided, I could see him and Israel lying side by side, both wavering with the tremulous movement of the water. O'Brien, though still quite a young man, was very bald. There he lay, with that bald head across the knees of the man who had killed him, and the quick fishes steering to and fro over both.

I was now alone upon the ship; the tide had just turned. The sun was within so few degrees of setting that already the shadow of the pines upon the western shore began to reach right across the anchorage, and fall in patterns on the deck. The evening breeze had sprung up, and though it was well warded off by the hill with the two peaks upon the east, the cord-

age had begun to sing a little softly to itself and the idle sails to rattle to and fro.

I began to see a danger to the ship. The jibs I speedily doused and brought tumbling to the deck; but the main-sail was a harder matter. Of course, when the schooner canted over, the boom had swung out-board, and the cap of it and a foot or two of sail hung even under water. I thought this made it still more dangerous; yet the strain was so heavy that I half feared to meddle. At last, I got my knife and cut the halyards. The peak dropped instantly, a great belly of loose canvas floated broad upon the water; and since, pull as I liked, I could not budge the downhaul, that was the extent of what I could accomplish. For the rest, the *Hispaniola* must trust to luck, like myself.

By this time the whole anchorage had fallen into shadow—the last rays, I remember, falling through a glade of the wood, and shining bright as jewels, on the flowery mantle of the wreck. It began to be chill; the tide was rapidly fleeting seaward, the schooner settling more and more on her beam ends.

I scrambled forward and looked over. It seemed shallow enough, and holding the cut hawser in both hands for a last security, I let myself drop softly overboard. The water scarcely reached my waist; the sand was firm and covered with ripple marks, and I waded

ashore in great spirits, leaving the *Hispaniola* on her side, with her main-sail trailing wide upon the surface of the bay. About the same time the sun went fairly down, and the breeze whistled low in the dusk among the tossing pines.

At least, and at last, I was off the sea, nor had I returned thence empty-handed. There lay the schooner, clear at last from buccaneers and ready for our own men to board and get to sea again. I had nothing nearer my fancy than to get home to the stockade and boast of my achievements. Possibly I might be blamed a bit for my truantry, but the recapture of the *Hispaniola* was a clenching answer, and I hoped that even Captain Smollett would confess I had not lost my time.

So thinking, and in famous spirits, I began to set my face homeward for the block-house and my companions. I remembered that the most easterly of the rivers which drain into Captain Kidd's anchorage ran from the two-peaked hill upon my left; and I bent my course in that direction that I might pass the stream while it was small. The wood was pretty open, and keeping along the lower spurs, I had soon turned the corner of that hill, and not long after waded to the mid-calf across the water-course.

This brought me near to where I had encountered Ben Gunn, the maroon; and I walked more circumspectly, keeping an eye on every side. The dusk had come nigh hand completely,

and, as I opened out the cleft between the two peaks, I became aware of a wavering glow against the sky, where, as I judged, the man of the island was cooking his supper before a roaring fire. And yet I wondered, in my heart, that he should show himself so careless. For if I could see this radiance, might it not reach the eyes of Silver himself where he camped upon the shore among the marshes?

Gradually the night fell blacker; it was all I could do to guide myself even roughly towards my destination; the double hill behind me and the Spy-glass on my right hand loomed faint and fainter; the stars were few and pale; and in the low ground where I wandered I kept tripping among bushes and rolling into sandy pits.

Suddenly a kind of brightness fell about me. I looked up; a pale glimmer of moonbeams had alighted on the summit of the Spy-glass, and soon after I saw something broad and silvery moving low down behind the trees, and knew the moon had risen.

With this to help me, I passed rapidly over what remained to me of my journey; and, sometimes walking, sometimes running, impatiently drew near to the stockade. Yet, as I began to thread the grove that lies before it, I was not so thoughtless but that I slacked my pace and went a trifle warily. It would have been a poor end of my adventures to get shot down by my own party in mistake.

The moon was climbing higher and higher; its light began to fall here and there in masses through the more open districts of the wood; and right in front of me a glow of a different colour appeared among the trees. It was red and hot, and now and again it was a little darkened—as it were the embers of a bonfire smouldering.

For the life of me, I could not think what it might be.

At last I came right down upon the borders of the clearing. The western end was already steeped in moonshine; the rest, and the block-house itself, still lay in a black shadow, chequered with long, silvery streaks of light. On the other side of the house an immense fire had burned itself into clear embers and shed a steady, red reverberation, contrasted strongly with the mellow paleness of the moon. There was not a soul stirring, nor a sound beside the noises of the breeze.

I stopped, with much wonder in my heart, and perhaps a little terror also. It had not been our way to build great fires; we were, indeed, by the captain's orders, somewhat niggardly of firewood; and I began to fear that something had gone wrong while I was absent.

I stole round by the eastern end, keeping close in shadow, and at a convenient place, where the darkness was thickest, crossed the palisade.

To make assurance surer, I got upon my hands

and knees, and crawled, without a sound, towards the corner of the house. As I drew nearer, my heart was suddenly and greatly lightened. It is not a pleasant noise in itself, and I have often complained of it at other times; but just then it was like music to hear my friends snoring together so loud and peaceful in their sleep. The sea cry of the watch, that beautiful "All's well," never fell more reassuringly on my ear.

In the meantime, there was no doubt of one thing; they kept an infamous bad watch. If it had been Silver and his lads that were now creeping in on them, not a soul would have seen daybreak. That was what it was, thought I, to have the captain wounded; and again I blamed myself sharply for leaving them in that danger with so few to mount guard.

By this time I had got to the door and stood up. All was dark within, so that I could distinguish nothing by the eye. As for sounds, there was the steady drone of the snorers, and a small occasional noise, a flickering or pecking that I could in no way account for.

With my arms before me I walked steadily in. I should lie down in my own place (I thought, with a silent chuckle) and enjoy their faces when they found me in the morning.

My foot struck something yielding—it was a sleeper's leg; and he turned and groaned, but without awakening.

And then, all of a sudden, a shrill voice broke forth out of the darkness:

"Pieces of eight! pieces of eight! pieces of eight! pieces of eight! pieces of eight!" and so forth, without pause or change, like the clacking of a tiny mill.

Silver's green parrot, Captain Flint! It was she whom I had heard pecking at a piece of bark; it was she, keeping better watch than any human being, who thus announced my arrival with her wearisome refrain.

I had no time left me to recover. At the sharp, clipping tone of the parrot, the sleepers awoke and sprang up; and with a mighty oath, the voice of Silver cried:—

"Who goes?"

I turned to run, struck violently against one person, recoiled, and ran full into the arms of a second, who, for his part, closed upon and held me tight.

"Bring a torch, Dick," said Silver, when my capture was thus assured.

And one of the men left the log-house, and presently returned with a lighted brand.

PART VI
CAPTAIN SILVER

CHAPTER XXVIII

IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP

THE red glare of the torch, lighting up the interior of the block-house, showed me the worst of my apprehensions realised. The pirates were in possession of the house and stores: there was the cask of cognac, there were the pork and bread, as before; and, what tenfold increased my horror, not a sign of any prisoner. I could only judge that all had perished, and my heart smote me sorely that I had not been there to perish with them.

There were six of the buccaneers, all told; not another man was left alive. Five of them were on their feet, flushed and swollen, suddenly called out of the first sleep of drunkenness. The sixth had only risen upon his elbow; he was deadly pale, and the blood-stained bandage round his head told that he had recently been wounded, and still more recently dressed. I remembered the man who had been shot and had run back among the woods in the great attack, and doubted not that this was he.

The parrot sat, preening her plumage, on

Long John's shoulder. He himself, I thought, looked somewhat paler and more stern than I was used to. He still wore the fine broadcloth suit in which he had fulfilled his mission, but it was bitterly the worse for wear, daubed with clay and torn with the sharp briers of the wood.

"So," said he, "here's Jim Hawkins, shiver my timbers! dropped in, like, eh? Well, come, I take that friendly."

And thereupon he sat down across the brandy cask, and began to fill a pipe.

"Give me a loan of the link, Dick," said he; and then, when he had a good light, "That'll do, lad," he added; "stick the glim in the wood heap; and you, gentlemen, bring yourselves to!—you needn't stand up for Mr. Hawkins; *he'll* excuse you, you may lay to that. And so, Jim"— stopping the tobacco—"here you were, and quite a pleasant surprise for poor old John. I see you were smart when first I set my eyes on you; but this here gets away from me clean, it do."

To all this, as may be well supposed, I made no answer. They had set me with my back against the wall; and I stood there, looking Silver in the face, pluckily enough, I hope, to all outward appearance, but with black despair in my heart.

Silver took a whiff or two of his pipe with great composure, and then ran on again.

"Now, you see, Jim, so be as you *are* here,"

says he, "I'll give you a piece of my mind. I've always liked you, I have, for a lad of spirit, and the picter of my own self when I was young and handsome. I always wanted you to jine and take your share, and die a gentleman, and now, my cock, you've got to. Cap'n Smollett's a fine seaman, as I'll own up to any day, but stiff on discipline. 'Dooty is dooty,' says he, and right he is. Just you keep clear of the cap'n. The doctor himself is gone dead again you—'ungrateful scamp' was what he said; and the short and the long of the whole story is about here: you can't go back to your own lot, for they won't have you; and, without you start a third ship's company all by yourself, which might be lonely, you'll have to jine with Cap'n Silver."

So far so good. My friends, then, were still alive, and though I partly believed the truth of Silver's statement, that the cabin party were incensed at me for my desertion, I was more relieved than distressed by what I heard.

"I don't say nothing as to your being in our hands," continued Silver, "though there you are, and you may lay to it. I'm all for argyment; I never seen good come out o' threatening. If you like the service, well, you'll jine; and if you don't, Jim, why, you're free to answer no—free and welcome, shipmate; and if fairer can be said by mortal seaman, shiver my sides!"

"Am I to answer then?" I asked, with a very

tremulous voice. Through all this sneering talk, I was made to feel the threat of death that overhung me, and my cheeks burned and my heart beat painfully in my breast.

"Lad," said Silver, "no one's a-pressing of you. Take your bearings. None of us won't hurry you, mate; time goes so pleasant in your company, you see."

"Well," says I, growing a bit bolder, "if I'm to choose, I declare I have a right to know what's what and why you're here, and where my friends are."

"Wot's wot?" repeated one of the buccaneers, in a deep growl. "Ah, he'd be a lucky one as knowed that!"

"You'll, perhaps, batten down your hatches till you're spoke to, my friend," cried Silver truculently to this speaker. And then, in his gracious tones, he replied to me: "Yesterday morning, Mr. Hawkins," said he, "in the dog-watch, down came Dr. Livesey with a flag of truce. Says he, 'Cap'n Silver, you're sold out. Ship's gone.' Well, maybe we'd been taking a glass, and a song to help it round. I won't say no. Leastways, none of us had looked out. We looked out, and by thunder! the old ship was gone. I never seen a pack o' fools look fishier; and you may lay to that, if I tells you that looked the fishiest. 'Well,' says the doctor, 'let's bargain.' We bargained, him and I, and here we are: stores, brandy,

block-house, the firewood you was thoughtful enough to cut, and, in a manner of speaking, the whole blessed boat, from cross-trees to keelson. As for them, they've tramped; I don't know where's they are."

He drew again quietly at his pipe.

"And lest you should take it into that head of yours," he went on, "that you was included in the treaty, here's the last word that was said: 'How many are you,' says I, 'to leave?' 'Four,' says he—'four, and one of us wounded. As for that boy, I don't know where he is, confound him,' says he, 'nor I don't much care. We're about sick of him.' These was his words."

"Is that all?" I asked.

"Well, it's all that you're to hear, my son," returned Silver.

"And now I am to choose?"

"And now you are to choose, and you may lay to that," said Silver.

"Well," said I, "I am not such a fool but I know pretty well what I have to look for. Let the worst come to the worst, it's little I care. I've seen too many die since I fell in with you. But there's a thing or two I have to tell you," I said, and by this time I was quite excited; "and the first is this: here you are, in a bad way: ship lost, treasure lost, men lost; your whole business gone to wreck; and if you want to know who did it—it was I! I was in the apple barrel the night we sighted land, and I heard

you, John, and you, Dick Johnson, and Hands, who is now at the bottom of the sea, and told every word you said before the hour was out. And as for the schooner, it was I who cut her cable, and it was I that killed the men you had aboard of her, and it was I who brought her where you'll never see her more, not one of you. The laugh's on my side; I've had the top of this business from the first; I no more fear you than I fear a fly. Kill me, if you please, or spare me. But one thing I'll say, and no more; if you spare me, bygones are bygones, and when you fellows are in court for piracy, I'll save you all I can. It is for you to choose. Kill another and do yourselves no good, or spare me and keep a witness to save you from the gallows."

I stopped, for, I tell you, I was out of breath, and, to my wonder, not a man of them moved, but all sat staring at me like as many sheep. And while they were still staring, I broke out again:—

"And now, Mr. Silver," I said, "I believe you're the best man here, and if things go to the worst, I'll take it kind of you to let the doctor know the way I took it."

"I'll bear it in mind," said Silver, with an accent so curious that I could not, for the life of me, decide whether he were laughing at my request, or had been favourably affected by my courage.

"I'll put one to that," cried the old mahogany-

faced seaman—Morgan by name—whom I had seen in Long John's public-house upon the quays of Bristol. "It was him that knowed Black Dog."

"Well, and see here," added the sea cook. "I'll put another again to that, by thunder! for it was this same boy that faked the chart from Billy Bones. First and last, we've split upon Jim Hawkins!"

"Then here goes!" said Morgan, with an oath.

And he sprang up, drawing his knife as if he had been twenty.

"Avast, there!" cried Silver. "Who are you, Tom Morgan? Maybe you thought you was cap'n here, perhaps. By the powers, but I'll teach you better! Cross me, and you'll go where many a good man's gone before you, first and last, these thirty year back—some to the yard-arm, shiver my timbers! and some by the board, and all to feed the fishes. There's never a man looked me between the eyes and seen a good day a'terwards, Tom Morgan, you may lay to that."

Morgan paused; but a hoarse murmur rose from the others.

"Tom's right," said one.

"I stood hazing long enough from one," added another. "I'll be hanged if I'll be hazed by you, John Silver."

"Did any of you gentlemen want to have it out with *me?*" roared Silver, bending far for-

ward from his position on the keg, with his pipe still glowing in his right hand. "Put a name on what you're at; you ain't dumb, I reckon. Him that wants shall get it. Have I lived this many years, and a son of a rum puncheon cock his hat athwart my hawse at the latter end of it? You know the way; you're all gentlemen o' fortune, by your account. Well, I'm ready. Take a cutlass, him that dares, and I'll see the colour of his inside, crutch and all, before that pipe's empty."

Not a man stirred; not a man answered.

"That's your sort, is it?" he added, returning his pipe to his mouth. "Well, you're a gay lot to look at, anyway. Not much worth to fight, you ain't. P'r'aps you can understand King George's English. I'm cap'n here by 'lection. I'm cap'n here because I'm the best man by a long sea-mile. You won't fight, as gentlemen o' fortune should; then, by thunder, you'll obey, and you may lay to it! I like that boy, now; I never seen a better boy than that. He's more a man than any pair of rats of you in this here house, and what I say is this: let me see him that'll lay a hand on him—that's what I say, and you may lay to it."

There was a long pause after this. I stood straight up against the wall, my heart still going like a sledge-hammer, but with a ray of hope now shining in my bosom. Silver leant back against the wall, his arms crossed, his pipe

in the corner of his mouth, as calm as though he had been in church; yet his eye kept wandering furtively, and he kept the tail of it on his unruly followers. They, on their part, drew gradually together towards the far end of the block-house, and the low hiss of their whispering sounded in my ear continuously, like a stream. One after another, they would look up, and the red light of the torch would fall for a second on their nervous faces; but it was not towards me, it was towards Silver that they turned their eyes.

"You seem to have a lot to say," remarked Silver, spitting far into the air. "Pipe up and let me hear it, or lay-to."

"Ax your pardon, sir," returned one of the men, "you're pretty free with some of the rules; maybe you'll kindly keep an eye upon the rest. This crew's dissatisfied; this crew don't vally bullying a marlinspike; this crew has its rights like other crews, I'll make so free as that; and by your own rules, I take it we can talk together. I ax your pardon, sir, acknowledging you for to be capting at this present; but I claim my right, and steps outside for a council."

And with an elaborate sea-salute, this fellow, a long, ill-looking, yellow-eyed man of five-and-thirty, stepped coolly towards the door and disappeared out of the house. One after another the rest followed his example; each making a salute as he passed; each adding some apology. "According to rules," said one. "Fo'c's'le

council," said Morgan. And so with one remark or another, all marched out, and left Silver and me alone with the torch.

The sea cook instantly removed his pipe.

"Now, look you here, Jim Hawkins," he said, in a steady whisper, that was no more than audible, "you're within half a plank of death, and, what's a long sight worse, of torture. They're going to throw me off. But, you mark, I stand by you through thick and thin. I didn't mean to; no, not till you spoke up. I was about desperate to lose that much blunt, and be hanged into the bargain. But I see you was the right sort. I says to myself: You stand by Hawkins, John, and Hawkins 'll stand by you. You're his last card, and, by the living thunder, John, he's yours! Back to back, says I. You save your witness, and he'll save your neck!"

I began dimly to understand.

"You mean all's lost?" I asked.

"Ay, by gum, I do!" he answered. "Ship gone, neck gone—that's the size of it. Once I looked into that bay, Jim Hawkins, and seen no schooner—well, I'm tough, but I gave out. As for that lot and their council, mark me, they're outright fools and cowards. I'll save your life—if so be as I can—from them. But, see here, Jim—tit for tat—you save Long John from swinging."

I was bewildered; it seemed a thing so hope-

less he was asking—he, the old buccaneer, the ringleader throughout.

"What I can do, that I'll do," I said.

"It's a bargain!" cried Long John. "You speak up plucky, and, by thunder! I've a chance."

He hobbled to the torch, where it stood propped among the firewood, and took a fresh light to his pipe.

"Understand me, Jim," he said, returning. "I've a head on my shoulders, I have. I'm on squire's side now. I know you've got that ship safe somewheres. How you done it, I don't know, but safe it is. I guess Hands and O'Brien turned soft. I never much believed in neither of *them*. Now you mark me. I ask no questions, nor I won't let others. I know when a game's up, I do; and I know a lad that's staunch. Ah, you that's young—you and me might have done a power of good together!"

He drew some cognac from the cask into a tin canikin.

"Will you taste, messmate?" he asked; and when I had refused: "Well, I'll take a drain myself, Jim," said he. "I need a caulker, for there's trouble on hand. And, talking o' trouble, why did that doctor give me the chart, Jim?"

My face expressed a wonder so unaffected that he saw the needlessness of further questions.

"Ah, well, he did, though," said he. "And there's something under that, no doubt—something, surely, under that, Jim—bad or good."

And he took another swallow of the brandy, shaking his great fair head like a man who looks forward to the worst.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE BLACK SPOT AGAIN

THE council of the buccaneers had lasted some time, when one of them re-entered the house, and with a repetition of the same salute, which had in my eyes an ironical air, begged for a moment's loan of the torch. Silver briefly agreed; and this emissary retired again, leaving us together in the dark.

"There's a breeze coming, Jim," said Silver, who had, by this time, adopted quite a friendly and familiar tone.

I turned to the loophole nearest me and looked out. The embers of the great fire had so far burned themselves out, and now glowed so low and duskily, that I understood why these conspirators desired a torch. About half-way down the slope to the stockade, they were collected in a group; one held the light; another was on his knees in their midst, and I saw the blade of an open knife shine in his hand with varying colours, in the moon and torchlight. The rest were all somewhat stooping, as though watching the manœuvres of this last. I could

just make out that he had a book as well as a knife in his hand; and was still wondering how anything so incongruous had come in their possession, when the kneeling figure rose once more to his feet, and the whole party began to move together towards the house.

"Here they come," said I; and I returned to my former position, for it seemed beneath my dignity that they should find me watching them.

"Well, let 'em come, lad—let 'em come," said Silver, cheerily. "I've still a shot in my locker."

The door opened, and the five men, standing huddled together just inside, pushed one of their number forward. In any other circumstances it would have been comical to see his slow advance, hesitating as he set down each foot, but holding his closed right hand in front of him.

"Step up, lad," cried Silver. "I won't eat you. Hand it over, lubber. I know the rules, I do; I won't hurt a depytation."

Thus encouraged, the buccaneer stepped forth more briskly, and having passed something to Silver, from hand to hand, slipped yet more smartly back again to his companions.

The sea cook looked at what had been given him.

"The black spot! I thought so," he observed. "Where might you have got the paper? Why, hillo! look here, now: this ain't lucky! You've

gone and cut this out of a Bible. What fool's cut a Bible?"

"Ah, there!" said Morgan—"there! Wot did I say? No good 'll come o' that, I said."

"Well, you've about fixed it now, among you," continued Silver. "You'll all swing now, I reckon. What soft-headed lubber had a Bible?"

"It was Dick," said one.

"Dick, was it? Then Dick can get to prayers," said Silver. "He's seen his slice of luck, has Dick, and you may lay to that."

But here the long man with the yellow eyes struck in.

"Belay that talk, John Silver," he said. "This crew has tipped you the black spot in full council, as in dooty bound; just you turn it over, as in dooty bound, and see what's wrote there. Then you can talk."

"Thanky, George," replied the sea cook. "You always was brisk for business, and has the rules by heart, George, as I'm pleased to see. Well, what is it, anyway? Ah! 'Deposed'—that's it, is it? Very pretty wrote, to be sure; like print, I swear. Your hand o' write, George? Why, you was gettin' quite a leadin' man in this here crew. You'll be cap'n next, I shouldn't wonder. Just oblige me with that torch again, will you? this pipe don't draw."

"Come, now," said George, "you don't fool this crew no more. You're a funny man, by

your account; but you're over now, and you'll maybe step down off that barrel, and help vote."

"I thought you said you knowed the rules," returned Silver, contemptuously. "Leastways, if you don't, I do; and I wait here—and I'm still your cap'n, mind—till you outs with your grievances, and I reply, in the meantime, your black spot ain't worth a biscuit. After that, we'll see."

"Oh," replied George, "you don't be under no kind of apprehension; *we're* all square, we are. First, you've made a hash of this cruise—you'll be a bold man to say no to that. Second, you let the enemy out o' this here trap for nothing. Why did they want out? I dunno; but it's pretty plain they wanted it. Third, you wouldn't let us go at them upon the march. Oh, we see through you, John Silver; you want to play booty, that's what's wrong with you. And then, fourth, there's this here boy."

"Is that all?" asked Silver, quietly.

"Enough, too," retorted George. "We'll all swing and sun-dry for your bungling."

"Well, now, look here, I'll answer these four p'ints; one after another I'll answer 'em. I made a hash o' this cruise, did I? Well, now, you all know what I wanted; and you all know, if that had been done, that we'd 'a' been aboard the *Hispaniola* this night as ever was, every man of us alive, and fit, and full of good plum-

duff, and the treasure in the hold of her, by thunder! Well, who crossed me? Who forced my hand, as was the lawful cap'n? Who tipped me the black spot the day we landed, and began this dance? Ah, it's a fine dance—I'm with you there—and looks mighty like a hornpipe in a rope's end at Execution Dock by London town, it does. But who done it? Why, it was Anderson, and Hands, and you, George Merry! And you're the last above board of that same meddling crew; and you have the Davy Jones's insolence to up and stand for cap'n over me—you, that sank the lot of us! By the powers! but this tops the stiffest yarn to nothing."

Silver paused, and I could see by the faces of George and his late comrades that these words had not been said in vain.

"That's for number one," cried the accused, wiping the sweat from his brow, for he had been talking with a vehemence that shook the house. "Why, I give you my word, I'm sick to speak to you. You've neither sense nor memory, and I leave it to fancy where your mothers was that let you come to sea. Sea! Gentlemen o' fortune! I reckon tailors is your trade."

"Go on, John," said Morgan. "Speak up to the others."

"Ah, the others!" returned John. "They're a nice lot, ain't they? You say this cruise is bungled. Ah! by gum, if you could understand how bad it's bungled, you would see! We're

that near the gibbet that my neck's stiff with thinking on it. You've seen 'em, maybe, hanged in chains, birds about 'em, seamen p'inting 'em out as they go down with the tide. 'Who's that?' says one. 'That! Why, that's John Silver. I knowed him well,' says another. And you can hear the chains a-jangle as you go about and reach for the other buoy. Now, that's about where we are, every mother's son of us, thanks to him, and Hands, and Anderson, and other ruination fools of you. And if you want to know about number four, and that boy, why, shiver my timbers! isn't he a hostage? Are we a-going to waste a hostage? No, not us; he might be our last chance, and I shouldn't wonder. Kill that boy? not me, mates! And number three? Ah, well, there's a deal to say to number three. Maybe you don't count it nothing to have a real college doctor come to see you every day—you, John, with your head broke—or you, George Merry, that had the ague shakes upon you not six hours agone, and has your eyes the colour of lemon peel to this same moment on the clock? And maybe, perhaps, you didn't know there was a consort coming, either? But there is; and not so long till then; and we'll see who'll be glad to have a hostage when it comes to that. And as for number two, and why I made a bargain—well, you came crawling on your knees to me to make it—on your knees you came, you was that downhearted—and

you'd have starved, too, if I hadn't—but that's a trifle! you look there—that's why!"

And he cast down upon the floor a paper that I instantly recognised—none other than the chart on yellow paper, with the three red crosses, that I had found in the oilcloth at the bottom of the captain's chest. Why the doctor had given it to him was more than I could fancy.

But if it were inexplicable to me, the appearance of the chart was incredible to the surviving mutineers. They leaped upon it like cats upon a mouse. It went from hand to hand, one tearing from another; and by the oaths and the cries and the childish laughter with which they accompanied their examination, you would have thought, not only they were fingering the very gold, but were at sea with it, besides, in safety.

"Yes," said one, "that's Flint, sure enough. J. F., and a score below, with a clove hitch to it; so he done ever."

"Mighty pretty," said George. "But how are we to get away with it, and us no ship?"

Silver suddenly sprang up, and supporting himself with a hand against the wall: "Now I give you warning, George," he cried. "One more word of your sauce, and I'll call you down and fight you. How? Why, how do I know? You had ought to tell me that—you and the rest, that lost me my schooner, with your interference, burn you! But not you, you can't; you

hain't got the invention of a cockroach. But civil you can speak, and shall, George Merry, you may lay to that."

"That's fair enow," said the old man Morgan.

"Fair! I reckon so," said the sea cook. "You lost the ship; I found the treasure. Who's the better man at that? And now I resign, by thunder! Elect whom you please to be your cap'n now; I'm done with it."

"Silver!" they cried. "Barbecue for ever! Barbecue for cap'n!"

"So that's the toon, is it?" cried the cook. "George, I reckon you'll have to wait another turn, friend; and lucky for you as I'm not a revengeful man. But that was never my way. And now, shipmates, this black spot? 'Tain't much good now, is it? Dick's crossed his luck and spoiled his Bible, and that's about all."

"It'll do to kiss the book on still, won't it?" growled Dick, who was evidently uneasy at the curse he had brought upon himself.

"A Bible with a bit cut out!" returned Silver, derisively. "Not it. It don't bind no more'n a ballad-book."

"Don't it, though?" cried Dick, with a sort of joy. "Well, I reckon that's worth having, too."

"Here, Jim—here's a cur'osity for you," said Silver; and he tossed me the paper.

It was a round, about the size of a crown piece. One side was blank, for it had been the last leaf;

the other contained a verse or two of Revelation —these words among the rest, which struck sharply home upon my mind: "Without are dogs and murderers." The printed side had been blackened with wood ash, which already began to come off and soil my fingers; on the blank side had been written with the same material the one word "Depposed." I have that curiosity beside me at this moment; but not a trace of writing now remains beyond a single scratch, such as a man might make with his thumb-nail.

That was the end of the night's business. Soon after, with a drink all round, we lay down to sleep, and the outside of Silver's vengeance was to put George Merry up for sentinel, and threaten him with death if he should prove unfaithful.

It was long ere I could close an eye, and Heaven knows I had matter enough for thought in the man whom I had slain that afternoon, in my own most perilous position, and, above all, in the remarkable game that I saw Silver now engaged upon—keeping the mutineers together with one hand, and grasping, with the other, after every means, possible and impossible, to make his peace and save his miserable life. He himself slept peacefully, and snored aloud; yet my heart was sore for him, wicked as he was, to think on the dark perils that environed, and the shameful gibbet that awaited him.

CHAPTER XXX

ON PAROLE

I WAS wakened—indeed, we were all wakened, for I could see even the sentinel shake himself together from where he had fallen against the door-post—by a clear, hearty voice hailing us from the margin of the wood:—

"Block-house, ahoy!" it cried. "Here's the doctor."

And the doctor it was. Although I was glad to hear the sound, yet my gladness was not without admixture. I remembered with confusion my insubordinate and stealthy conduct; and when I saw where it had brought me—among what companions and surrounded by what dangers—I felt ashamed to look him in the face.

He must have risen in the dark, for the day had hardly come; and when I ran to a loophole and looked out, I saw him standing, like Silver once before, up to the mid-leg in creeping vapour.

"You, doctor! Top o' the morning to you, sir!" cried Silver, broad awake and beaming with good nature in a moment. "Bright and

early, to be sure; and it's the early bird, as the saying goes, that gets the rations. George, shake up your timbers, son, and help Dr. Livesey over the ship's side. All a-doin' well, your patients was—all well and merry."

So he pattered on, standing on the hill-top, with his crutch under his elbow, and one hand upon the side of the log-house—quite the old John in voice, manner, and expression.

"We've quite a surprise for you, too, sir," he continued. "We've a little stranger here—he! he! A noo boarder and lodger, sir, and looking fit and taut as a fiddle; slep' like a supercargo, he did, right alongside of John—stem to stem we was, all night."

Dr. Livesey was by this time across the stockade and pretty near the cook; and I could hear the alteration in his voice as he said:—

"Not Jim?"

"The very same Jim as ever was," says Silver.

The doctor stopped outright, although he did not speak, and it was some seconds before he seemed able to move on.

"Well, well," he said, at last, "duty first and pleasure afterwards, as you might have said yourself, Silver. Let us overhaul these patients of yours."

A moment afterwards he had entered the block-house, and, with one grim nod to me, proceeded with his work among the sick. He seemed under no apprehension, though he must

have known that his life, among these treacherous demons, depended on a hair; and he rattled on to his patients as if he were paying an ordinary professional visit in a quiet English family. His manner, I suppose, re-acted on the men; for they behaved to him as if nothing had occurred—as if he were still ship's doctor, and they still faithful hands before the mast.

"You're doing well, my friend," he said to the fellow with the bandaged head, "and if ever any person had a close shave, it was you; your head must be as hard as iron. Well, George, how goes it? You're a pretty colour, certainly; why, your liver, man, is upside down. Did you take that medicine? Did he take that medicine, men?"

"Ay, ay, sir, he took it, sure enough," returned Morgan.

"Because, you see, since I am mutineers' doctor, or prison doctor, as I prefer to call it," says Dr. Livesey, in his pleasantest way, "I make it a point of honour not to lose a man for King George (God bless him!) and the gallows."

The rogues looked at each other, but swallowed the home-thrust in silence.

"Dick don't feel well, sir," said one.

"Don't he?" replied the doctor. "Well, step up here, Dick, and let me see your tongue. No, I should be surprised if he did! the man's tongue is fit to frighten the French. Another fever."

"Ah, there," said Morgan, "that comed of sp'iling Bibles."

"That comed—as you call it—of being arrant asses," retorted the doctor, "and not having sense enough to know honest air from poison, and the dry land from a vile, pestiferous slough. I think it most probable—though, of course, it's only an opinion—that you'll all have the deuce to pay before you get that malaria out of your systems. Camp in a bog, would you? Silver, I'm surprised at you. You're less of a fool than many, take you all round; but you don't appear to me to have the rudiments of a notion of the rules of health.

"Well," he added, after he had dosed them round, and they had taken his prescriptions, with really laughable humility, more like charity school-children than blood-guilty mutineers and pirates—"well, that's done for to-day. And now I should wish to have a talk with that boy, please."

And he nodded his head in my direction carelessly.

George Merry was at the door, spitting and spluttering over some bad-tasted medicine; but at the first word of the doctor's proposal he swung round with a deep flush, and cried "No!" and swore.

Silver struck the barrel with his open hand.

"Si-lence!" he roared, and looked about him positively like a lion. "Doctor," he went on,

in his usual tones, "I was a-thinking of that, knowing as how you had a fancy for the boy. We're all humbly grateful for your kindness, and, as you see, puts faith in you, and takes the drugs down like that much grog. And I take it I've found a way as 'll suit all. Hawkins, will you give me your word of honour as a young gentleman—for a young gentleman you are, although poor born—your word of honour not to slip your cable?"

I readily gave the pledge required.

"Then, doctor," said Silver, "you just step outside o' that stockade, and once you're there, I'll bring the boy down on the inside, and I reckon you can yarn through the spars. Good day to you, sir, and all our dooties to the squire and Cap'n Smollett."

The explosion of disapproval, which nothing but Silver's black looks had restrained, broke out immediately the doctor had left the house. Silver was roundly accused of playing double—of trying to make a separate peace for himself—of sacrificing the interests of his accomplices and victims; and, in one word, of the identical, exact thing that he was doing. It seemed to me so obvious, in this case, that I could not imagine how he was to turn their anger. But he was twice the man the rest were; and his last night's victory had given him a huge preponderance on their minds. He called them all the fools and dolts you can imagine, said it was nec-

essary I should talk to the doctor, fluttered the chart in their faces, asked them if they could afford to break the treaty the very day they were bound a-treasure-hunting.

"No, by thunder!" he cried, "it's us must break the treaty when the time comes; and till then I'll gammon that doctor, if I have to ile his boots with brandy."

And then he bade them get the fire lit, and stalked out upon his crutch, with his hand on my shoulder, leaving them in a disarray, and silenced by his volubility rather than convinced.

"Slow, lad, slow," he said. "They might round upon us in a twinkle of an eye, if we was seen to hurry."

Very deliberately, then, did we advance across the sand to where the doctor awaited us on the other side of the stockade, and as soon as we were within easy speaking distance, Silver stopped.

"You'll make a note of this here also, doctor," says he, "and the boy'll tell you how I saved his life, and were deposed for it, too, and you may lay to that. Doctor, when a man's steering as near the wind as me—playing chuck-farthing with the last breath in his body, like—you wouldn't think it too much, mayhap, to give him one good word? You'll please bear in mind it's not my life only now—it's that boy's into the bargain; and you'll speak me fair, doctor, and give me a bit o' hope to go on, for the sake of mercy."

Silver was a changed man, once he was out there and had his back to his friends and the block-house; his cheeks seemed to have fallen in, his voice trembled; never was a soul more dead in earnest.

"Why, John, you're not afraid?" asked Dr. Livesey.

"Doctor, I'm no coward; no, not I—not *so* much!" and he snapped his fingers. "If I was I wouldn't say it. But I'll own up fairly, I've the shakes upon me for the gallows. You're a good man and a true: I never seen a better man! And you'll not forget what I done good, not any more than you'll forget the bad, I know. And I step aside—see here—and leave you and Jim alone. And you'll put that down for me, too, for it's a long stretch, is that!"

So saying, he stepped back a little way, till he was out of earshot, and there sat down upon a tree-stump and began to whistle; spinning round now and again upon his seat so as to command a sight, sometimes of me and the doctor, and sometimes of his unruly ruffians as they went to and fro in the sand, between the fire—which they were busy rekindling—and the house, from which they brought forth pork and bread to make the breakfast.

"So, Jim," said the doctor, sadly, "here you are. As you have brewed, so shall you drink, my boy. Heaven knows, I cannot find it in my heart to blame you; but this much I will

say, be it kind or unkind: when Captain Smollett was well, you dared not have gone off; and when he was ill, and couldn't help it, by George, it was downright cowardly!"

I will own that I here began to weep. "Doctor," I said, "you might spare me. I have blamed myself enough; my life's forfeit anyway, and I should have been dead by now, if Silver hadn't stood for me; and doctor, believe this, I can die—and I daresay I deserve it—but what I fear is torture. If they come to torture me——"

"Jim," the doctor interrupted, and his voice was quite changed, "Jim, I can't have this. Whip over, and we'll run for it."

"Doctor," said I, "I passed my word."

"I know, I know," he cried. "We can't help that, Jim, now. I'll take it on my shoulders, holus bolus, blame and shame, my boy; but stay here, I cannot let you. Jump! One jump, and you're out, and we'll run for it like antelopes."

"No," I replied, "you know right well you wouldn't do the thing yourself; neither you, nor squire, nor captain; and no more will I. Silver trusted me; I passed my word, and back I go. But, doctor, you did not let me finish. If they come to torture me, I might let slip a word of where the ship is; for I got the ship, part by luck and part by risking, and she lies in North Inlet, on the southern beach, and just

below high water. At half tide she must be high and dry."

"The ship!" exclaimed the doctor.

Rapidly I described to him my adventures, and he heard me out in silence.

"There is a kind of fate in this," he observed, when I had done. "Every step, it's you that saves our lives; and do you suppose by any chance that we are going to let you lose yours? That would be a poor return, my boy. You found out the plot; you found Ben Gunn—the best deed that ever you did, or will do, though you live to ninety. Oh, by Jupiter, and talking of Ben Gunn! why, this is the mischief in person. Silver," he cried, "Silver!—I'll give you a piece of advice," he continued, as the cook drew near again; "don't you be in any great hurry after that treasure."

"Why, sir, I do my possible, which that ain't," said Silver. "I can only, asking your pardon, save my life and the boy's by seeking for that treasure; and you may lay to that."

"Well, Silver," replied the doctor, "if that is so, I'll go one step further: look out for squalls when you find it."

"Sir," said Silver, "as between man and man, that's too much and too little. What you're after, why you left the block-house, why you give me that there chart, I don't know, now, do I? and yet I done your bidding with my eyes shut and never a word of hope! But no, this

here's too much. If you won't tell me what you mean plain out, just say so, and I'll leave the helm."

"No," said the doctor, musingly, "I've no right to say more; it's not my secret, you see, Silver, or, I give you my word, I'd tell it you. But I'll go as far with you as I dare go, and a step beyond; for I'll have my wig sorted by the captain or I'm mistaken! And, first, I'll give you a bit of hope: Silver, if we both get alive out of this wolf-trap, I'll do my best to save you, short of perjury."

Silver's face was radiant. "You couldn't say more, I'm sure, sir, not if you was my mother," he cried.

"Well, that's my first concession," added the doctor. "My second is a piece of advice: Keep the boy close beside you, and when you need help, halloo. I'm off to seek it for you, and that itself will show you if I speak at random. Good-bye, Jim."

And Dr. Livesey shook hands with me through the stockade, nodded to Silver, and set off at a brisk pace into the wood.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE TREASURE HUNT— FLINT'S POINTER

JIM," said Silver, when we were alone, "if I saved your life, you saved mine; and I'll not forget it. I seen the doctor waving you to run for it—with the tail of my eye, I did; and I seen you say no, as plain as hearing. Jim, that's one to you. This is the first glint of hope I had since the attack failed, and I owe it you. And now, Jim, we're to go in for this here treasure-hunting, with sealed orders, too, and I don't like it; and you and me must stick close, back to back like, and we'll save our necks in spite o' fate and fortune."

Just then a man hailed us from the fire that breakfast was ready, and we were soon seated here and there about the sand over biscuit and fried junk. They had lit a fire fit to roast an ox; and it was now grown so hot that they could only approach it from the windward, and even there not without precaution. In the same wasteful spirit, they had cooked, I suppose, three times more than we could eat; and one of them, with an empty laugh, threw

what was left into the fire, which blazed and roared again over this unusual fuel. I never in my life saw men so careless of the morrow; hand to mouth is the only word that can describe their way of doing; and what with wasted food and sleeping sentries, though they were bold enough for a brush and be done with it, I could see their entire unfitness for anything like a prolonged campaign.

Even Silver, eating away, with Captain Flint upon his shoulder, had not a word of blame for their recklessness. And this the more surprised me, for I thought he had never shown himself so cunning as he did then.

"Ay, mates," said he, "it's lucky you have Barbecue to think for you with this here head. I got what I wanted, I did. Sure enough, they have the ship. Where they have it, I don't know yet; but once we hit the treasure, we'll have to jump about and find out. And then, mates, us that has the boats, I reckon, has the upper hand."

Thus he kept running on, with his mouth full of the hot bacon: thus he restored their hope and confidence, and, I more than suspect, repaired his own at the same time.

"As for hostage," he continued, "that's his last talk, I guess, with them he loves so dear. I've got my piece o' news, and thanky to him for that; but it's over and done. I'll take him in a line when we go treasure-hunting, for we'll

keep him like so much gold, in case of accidents, you mark, and in the meantime. Once we got the ship and treasure both, and off to sea like jolly companions, why, then, we'll talk Mr. Hawkins over, we will, and we'll give him his share, to be sure, for all his kindness."

It was no wonder the men were in a good humour now. For my part, I was horribly cast down. Should the scheme he had now sketched prove feasible, Silver, already doubly a traitor, would not hesitate to adopt it. He had still a foot in either camp, and there was no doubt he would prefer wealth and freedom with the pirates to a bare escape from hanging, which was the best he had to hope on our side.

Nay, and even if things so fell out that he was forced to keep his faith with Dr. Livesey, even then what danger lay before us! What a moment that would be when the suspicions of his followers turned to certainty, and he and I should have to fight for dear life—he, a cripple, and I, a boy—against five strong and active seamen!

Add to this double apprehension, the mystery that still hung over the behaviour of my friends; their unexplained desertion of the stockade; their inexplicable cession of the chart; or, harder still to understand, the doctor's last warning to Silver, "Look out for squalls when you find it"; and you will readily believe how little taste I found in my breakfast, and with how uneasy a

heart I set forth behind my captors on the quest for treasure.

We made a curious figure, had any one been there to see us; all in soiled sailor clothes, and all but me armed to the teeth. Silver had two guns slung about him—one before and one behind—besides the great cutlass at his waist, and a pistol in each pocket of his square-tailed coat. To complete his strange appearance, Captain Flint sat perched upon his shoulder and gabbling odds and ends of purposeless sea-talk. I had a line about my waist, and followed obediently after the sea cook, who held the loose end of the rope, now in his free hand, now between his powerful teeth. For all the world, I was led like a dancing bear.

The other men were variously burthened; some carrying picks and shovels—for that had been the very first necessary they brought ashore from the *Hispaniola*—others laden with pork, bread, and brandy for the midday meal. All the stores, I observed, came from our stock; and I could see the truth of Silver's words the night before. Had he not struck a bargain with the doctor, he and his mutineers, deserted by the ship, must have been driven to subsist on clear water and the proceeds of their hunting. Water would have been little to their taste; a sailor is not usually a good shot; and, besides all that, when they were so short of eatables, it was not likely they would be very flush of powder.

Well, thus equipped, we all set out—even the fellow with the broken head, who should certainly have kept in shadow—and straggled, one after another, to the beach, where the two gigs awaited us. Even these bore trace of the drunken folly of the pirates, one in a broken thwart, and both in their muddy and unbailed condition. Both were to be carried along with us, for the sake of safety; and so, with our numbers divided between them, we set forth upon the bosom of the anchorage.

As we pulled over, there was some discussion on the chart. The red cross was, of course, far too large to be a guide; and the terms of the note on the back, as you will hear, admitted of some ambiguity. They ran, the reader may remember, thus:—

"Tall tree, Spy-glass shoulder, bearing a point to N. of N. N. E.
"Skeleton Island E. S. E. and by E.
"Ten feet."

A tall tree was thus the principal mark. Now, right before us, the anchorage was bounded by a plateau from two to three hundred feet high, adjoining on the north the sloping southern shoulder of the Spy-glass, and rising again towards the south into the rough, cliffy eminence called the Mizzen-mast Hill. The top of the plateau was dotted thickly with pine-trees of varying height. Every here and there, one of a different species rose forty or fifty feet clear above its neighbours, and which of these was

the particular "tall tree" of Captain Flint could only be decided on the spot, and by the readings of the compass.

Yet, although that was the case, every man on board the boats had picked a favourite of his own ere we were half-way over, Long John alone shrugging his shoulders and bidding them wait till they were there.

We pulled easily, by Silver's directions, not to weary the hands prematurely; and, after quite a long passage, landed at the mouth of the second river—that which runs down a woody cleft of the Spy-glass. Thence, bending to our left, we began to ascend the slope towards the plateau.

At the first outset, heavy, miry ground and a matted, marish vegetation, greatly delayed our progress; but by little and little the hill began to steepen and become stony under foot, and the wood to change its character and to grow in a more open order. It was, indeed, a most pleasant portion of the island that we were now approaching. A heavy-scented broom and many flowering shrubs had almost taken the place of grass. Thickets of green nutmeg trees were dotted here and there with the red columns and the broad shadow of the pines; and the first mingled their spice with the aroma of the others. The air, besides, was fresh and stirring, and this, under the sheer sunbeams, was a wonderful refreshment to our senses.

The party spread itself abroad, in a fan shape, shouting and leaping to and fro. About the centre, and a good way behind the rest, Silver and I followed—I tethered by my rope, he ploughing, with deep pants, among the sliding gravel. From time to time, indeed, I had to lend him a hand, or he must have missed his footing and fallen backward down the hill.

We had thus proceeded for about half a mile, and were approaching the brow of the plateau, when the man upon the farthest left began to cry aloud, as if in terror. Shout after shout came from him, and the others began to run in his direction.

"He can't 'a' found the treasure," said old Morgan, hurrying past us from the right, "for that's clean a-top."

Indeed, as we found when we also reached the spot, it was something very different. At the foot of a pretty big pine, and involved in a green creeper, which had even partly lifted some of the smaller bones, a human skeleton lay, with a few shreds of clothing, on the ground. I believe a chill struck for a moment to every heart.

"He was a seaman," said George Merry, who, bolder than the rest, had gone up close, and was examining the rags of clothing. "Leastways, this is good sea-cloth."

"Ay, ay," said Silver, "like enough; you wouldn't look to find a bishop here, I reckon.

But what sort of a way is that for bones to lie? 'Tain't in natur'."

Indeed, on a second glance, it seemed impossible to fancy that the body was in a natural position. But for some disarray (the work, perhaps, of the birds that had fed upon him, or of the slow-growing creeper that had gradually enveloped his remains) the man lay perfectly straight—his feet pointing in one direction, his hands, raised above his head like a diver's, pointing directly in the opposite.

"I've taken a notion into my old numskull," observed Silver. "Here's the compass; there's the tip-top p'int o' Skeleton Island, stickin' out like a tooth. Just take a bearing, will you, along the line of them bones."

It was done. The body pointed straight in the direction of the island, and the compass read duly E. S. E. and by E.

"I thought so," cried the cook; "this here is a p'inter. Right up there is our line for the Pole Star and the jolly dollars. But, by thunder! if it don't make me cold inside to think of Flint. This is one of *his* jokes, and no mistake. Him and these six was alone here; he killed 'em, every man; and this one he hauled here and laid down by compass, shiver my timbers! They're long bones, and the hair's been yellow. Ay, that would be Allardyce. You mind Allardyce, Tom Morgan?"

"Ay, ay," returned Morgan, "I mind him;

he owed me money, he did, and took my knife ashore with him."

"Speaking of knives," said another, "why don't we find his'n lying round? Flint wasn't the man to pick a seaman's pocket; and the birds, I guess, would leave it be."

"By the powers, and that's true!" cried Silver.

"There ain't a thing left here," said Merry, still feeling round among the bones, "not a copper doit nor a baccy box. It don't look nat'ral to me."

"No, by gum, it don't," agreed Silver; "not nat'ral, nor not nice, says you. Great guns! messmates, but if Flint was living, this would be a hot spot for you and me. Six they were, and six are we; and bones is what they are now."

"I saw him dead with these here dead-lights," said Morgan. "Billy took me in. There he laid, with penny-pieces on his eyes."

"Dead—ay, sure enough he's dead and gone below," said the fellow with the bandage; "but if ever sperrit walked, it would be Flint's. Dear heart, but he died bad, did Flint!"

"Ay, that he did," observed another; "now he raged, and now he hollered for the rum, and now he sang. 'Fifteen Men' were his only song, mates; and I tell you true, I never rightly liked to hear it since. It was main hot, and the windy was open, and I hear that old song comin' out as clear as clear—and the death-haul on the man already."

"Come, come," said Silver, "stow this talk. He's dead, and he don't walk, that I know; leastways, he won't walk by day, and you may lay to that. Care killed a cat. Fetch ahead for the doubloons."

We started, certainly; but in spite of the hot sun and the staring daylight, the pirates no longer ran separate and shouting through the wood, but kept side by side and spoke with bated breath. The terror of the dead buccaneer had fallen on their spirits.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE TREASURE HUNT—THE VOICE AMONG THE TREES

PARTLY from the damping influence of this alarm, partly to rest Silver and the sick folk, the whole party sat down as soon as they had gained the brow of the ascent.

The plateau being somewhat tilted towards the west, this spot on which we had paused commanded a wide prospect on either hand. Before us, over the tree-tops, we beheld the Cape of the Woods fringed with surf; behind, we not only looked down upon the anchorage and Skeleton Island, but saw—clear across the spit and the eastern lowlands—a great field of open sea upon the east. Sheer above us rose the Spy-glass, here dotted with single pines, there black with precipices. There was no sound but that of the distant breakers, mounting from all round, and the chirp of countless insects in the brush. Not a man, not a sail upon the sea; the very largeness of the view increased the sense of solitude.

Silver, as he sat, took certain bearings with his compass.

"There are three 'tall trees,'" said he, "about in the right line from Skeleton Island. 'Spy-glass Shoulder,' I take it, means that lower p'int there. It's child's play to find the stuff now. I've half a mind to dine first."

"I don't feel sharp," growled Morgan. "Thinkin' o' Flint—I think it were—as done me."

"Ah, well, my son, you praise your stars he's dead," said Silver.

"He were an ugly devil," cried a third pirate, with a shudder; "that blue in the face, too!"

"That was how the rum took him," added Merry. "Blue! well, I reckon he was blue. That's a true word."

Ever since they had found the skeleton and got upon this train of thought, they had spoken lower and lower, and they had almost got to whispering by now, so that the sound of their talk hardly interrupted the silence of the wood. All of a sudden, out of the middle of the trees in front of us, a thin, high, trembling voice struck up the well-known air and words:—

> "Fifteen men on the dead man's chest—
> Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

I never have seen men more dreadfully affected than the pirates. The colour went from their six faces like enchantment; some leaped to their feet, some clawed hold of others; Morgan grovelled on the ground.

"It's Flint, by——!" cried Merry.

The song had stopped as suddenly as it began —broken off, you would have said, in the middle of a note, as though some one had laid his hand upon the singer's mouth. Coming so far through the clear, sunny atmosphere among the green tree-tops, I thought it had sounded airily and sweetly; and the effect on my companions was the stranger.

"Come," said Silver, struggling with his ashen lips to get the word out, "this won't do. Stand by to go about. This is a rum start, and I can't name the voice; but it's some one skylarking—some one that's flesh and blood, and you may lay to that."

His courage had come back as he spoke, and some of the colour to his face along with it. Already the others had begun to lend an ear to this encouragement, and were coming a little to themselves, when the same voice broke out again—not this time singing, but in a faint distant hail, that echoed yet fainter among the clefts of the Spy-glass.

"Darby M'Graw," it wailed—for that is the word that best describes the sound—"Darby M'Graw! Darby M'Graw!" again and again and again; and then rising a little higher, and with an oath that I leave out, "Fetch aft the rum, Darby!"

The buccaneers remained rooted to the ground, their eyes starting from their heads.

Long after the voice had died away they still stared in silence, dreadfully, before them.

"That fixes it!" gasped one. "Let's go!"

"They was his last words," moaned Morgan, "his last words above board."

Dick had his Bible out, and was praying volubly. He had been well brought up, had Dick, before he came to sea and fell among bad companions.

Still, Silver was unconquered. I could hear his teeth rattle in his head; but he had not yet surrendered.

"Nobody in this here island ever heard of Darby," he muttered; "not one but us that's here." And then, making a great effort, "Shipmates," he cried, "I'm here to get that stuff, and I'll not be beat by man nor devil. I never was feared of Flint in his life, and, by the powers, I'll face him dead. There's seven hundred thousand pound not a quarter of a mile from here. When did ever a gentleman o' fortune show his stern to that much dollars, for a boosy old seaman with a blue mug—and him dead, too?"

But there was no sign of re-awakening courage in his followers; rather, indeed, of growing terror at the irreverence of his words.

"Belay there, John!" said Merry. "Don't you cross a sperrit."

And the rest were all too terrified to reply. They would have run away severally had they

dared; but fear kept them together, and kept them close by John, as if his daring helped them. He, on his part, had pretty well fought his weakness down.

"Sperrit? Well, maybe," he said. "But there's one thing not clear to me. There was an echo. Now, no man ever seen a sperrit with a shadow; well, then, what's he doing with an echo to him, I should like to know? That ain't in natur', surely?"

This argument seemed weak enough to me. But you can never tell what will affect the superstitious, and, to my wonder, George Merry was greatly relieved.

"Well, that's so," he said. "You've a head upon your shoulders, John, and no mistake. 'Bout ship, mates! This here crew is on a wrong tack, I do believe. And come to think on it, it was like Flint's voice, I grant you, but not just so clear-away like it, after all. It was liker somebody else's voice now—it was liker——"

"By the powers, Ben Gunn!" roared Silver.

"Ay, and so it were," cried Morgan, springing on his knees. "Ben Gunn it were!"

"It don't make much odds, do it, now?" asked Dick. "Ben Gunn's not here in the body, any more'n Flint."

But the older hands greeted this remark with scorn.

"Why, nobody minds Ben Gunn," cried Merry; "dead or alive, nobody minds him."

It was extraordinary how their spirits had returned, and how the natural colour had revived in their faces. Soon they were chatting together, with intervals of listening; and not long after, hearing no further sound, they shouldered the tools and set forth again, Merry walking first with Silver's compass to keep them on the right line with Skeleton Island. He had said the truth: dead or alive, nobody minded Ben Gunn.

Dick alone still held his Bible, and looked around him as he went, with fearful glances; but he found no sympathy, and Silver even joked him on his precautions.

"I told you," said he—"I told you, you had sp'iled your Bible. If it ain't no good to swear by, what do you suppose a sperrit would give for it? Not that!" and he snapped his big fingers, halting a moment on his crutch.

But Dick was not to be comforted; indeed, it was soon plain to me that the lad was falling sick; hastened by heat, exhaustion, and the shock of his alarm, the fever, predicted by Dr. Livesey, was evidently growing swiftly higher.

It was fine open walking here, upon the summit; our way lay a little down-hill, for, as I have said, the plateau tilted towards the west. The pines, great and small, grew wide apart; and even between the clumps of nutmeg and azalea, wide open spaces baked in the hot sunshine. Striking, as we did, pretty near north-

west across the island, we drew, on the one hand, ever nearer under the shoulders of the Spy-glass, and on the other, looked ever wider over that western bay where I had once tossed and trembled in the coracle.

The first of the tall trees was reached, and by the bearing, proved the wrong one. So with the second. The third rose nearly two hundred feet into the air above a clump of underwood; a giant of a vegetable, with a red column as big as a cottage; and a wide shadow around in which a company could have manœuvred. It was conspicuous far to sea both on the east and west, and might have been entered as a sailing mark upon the chart.

But it was not its size that now impressed my companions; it was the knowledge that seven hundred thousand pounds in gold lay somewhere buried below its spreading shadow. The thought of the money, as they drew nearer, swallowed up their previous terrors. Their eyes burned in their heads; their feet grew speedier and lighter; their whole soul was bound up in that fortune, that whole lifetime of extravagance and pleasure, that lay waiting there for each of them.

Silver hobbled, grunting, on his crutch; his nostrils stood out and quivered; he cursed like a madman when the flies settled on his hot and shiny countenance; he plucked furiously at the line that held me to him, and, from time to time,

turned his eyes upon me with a deadly look. Certainly he took no pains to hide his thoughts; and certainly I read them like print. In the immediate nearness of the gold, all else had been forgotten; his promise and the doctor's warning were both things of the past; and I could not doubt that he hoped to seize upon the treasure, find and board the *Hispaniola* under cover of night, cut every honest throat about that island, and sail away as he had at first intended, laden with crimes and riches.

Shaken as I was with these alarms, it was hard for me to keep up with the rapid pace of the treasure-hunters. Now and again I stumbled; and it was then that Silver plucked so roughly at the rope and launched at me his murderous glances. Dick, who had dropped behind us, and now brought up the rear, was babbling to himself both prayers and curses, as his fever kept rising. This also added to my wretchedness, and, to crown all, I was haunted by the thought of the tragedy that had once been acted on that plateau, when that ungodly buccaneer with the blue face—he who died at Savannah, singing and shouting for drink—had there, with his own hand, cut down his six accomplices. This grove, that was now so peaceful, must then have rung with cries, I thought; and even with the thought I could believe I heard it ringing still.

We were now at the margin of the thicket.

"Huzza, mates, all together!" shouted Merry; and the foremost broke into a run.

And suddenly, not ten yards farther, we beheld them stop. A low cry arose. Silver doubled his pace, digging away with the foot of his crutch like one possessed: and next moment he and I had come also to a dead halt.

Before us was a great excavation, not very recent, for the sides had fallen in and grass had sprouted on the bottom. In this were the shaft of a pick broken in two and the boards of several packing-cases strewn around. On one of these boards I saw, branded with a hot iron, the name *Walrus*—the name of Flint's ship.

All was clear to probation. The *cache* had been found and rifled: the seven hundred thousand pounds were gone!

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE FALL OF A CHIEFTAIN

THERE never was such an overturn in this world. Each of these six men was as though he had been struck. But with Silver the blow passed almost instantly. Every thought of his soul had been set full-stretch, like a racer, on that money; well, he was brought up in a single second, dead; and he kept his head, found his temper, and changed his plan before the others had had time to realise the disappointment.

"Jim," he whispered, "take that, and stand by for trouble."

And he passed me a double-barrelled pistol.

At the same time he began quietly moving northward, and in a few steps had put the hollow between us two and the other five. Then he looked at me and nodded, as much as to say, "Here is a narrow corner," as, indeed, I thought it was. His looks were now quite friendly; and I was so revolted at these constant changes, that I could not forbear whispering, "So you've changed sides again."

There was no time left for him to answer in. The buccaneers, with oaths and cries, began to leap, one after another, into the pit, and to dig with their fingers, throwing the boards aside as they did so. Morgan found a piece of gold. He held it up with a perfect spout of oaths. It was a two-guinea piece, and it went from hand to hand among them for a quarter of a minute.

"Two guineas!" roared Merry, shaking it at Silver. "That's your seven hundred thousand pounds, is it? You're the man for bargains, ain't you? You're him that never bungled nothing, you wooden-headed lubber!"

"Dig away, boys," said Silver, with the coolest insolence; "you'll find some pig-nuts and I shouldn't wonder."

"Pig-nuts!" repeated Merry, in a scream. "Mates, do you hear that? I tell you, now, that man there knew it all along. Look in the face of him, and you'll see it wrote there."

"Ah, Merry," remarked Silver, "standing for cap'n again? You're a pushing lad, to be sure."

But this time every one was entirely in Merry's favour. They began to scramble out of the excavation, darting furious glances behind them. One thing I observed, which looked well for us: they all got out upon the opposite side from Silver.

Well, there we stood, two on one side, five on the other, the pit between us, and nobody

screwed up high enough to offer the first blow. Silver never moved; he watched them, very upright on his crutch, and looked as cool as ever I saw him. He was brave, and no mistake.

At last, Merry seemed to think a speech might help matters.

"Mates," says he, "there's two of them alone there; one's the old cripple that brought us all here and blundered us down to this; the other's that cub that I mean to have the heart of. Now, mates——"

He was raising his arm and his voice, and plainly meant to lead a charge. But just then —crack! crack! crack!—three musket-shots flashed out of the thicket. Merry tumbled head foremost into the excavation; the man with the bandage spun round like a teetotum, and fell all his length upon his side, where he lay dead, but still twitching; and the other three turned and ran for it with all their might.

Before you could wink, Long John had fired two barrels of a pistol into the struggling Merry; and as the man rolled up his eyes at him in the last agony, "George," said he, "I reckon I settled you."

At the same moment the doctor, Gray, and Ben Gunn joined us, with smoking muskets, from among the nutmeg trees.

"Forward!" cried the doctor. "Double quick, my lads. We must head 'em off the boats."

And we set off at a great pace, sometimes plunging through the bushes to the chest.

I tell you, but Silver was anxious to keep up with us. The work that man went through, leaping on his crutch till the muscles of his chest were fit to burst, was work no sound man ever equalled; and so thinks the doctor. As it was, he was already thirty yards behind us, and on the verge of strangling, when we reached the brow of the slope.

"Doctor," he hailed, "see there! no hurry!"

Sure enough there was no hurry. In a more open part of the plateau, we could see the three survivors still running in the same direction as they had started, right for Mizzen-mast Hill. We were already between them and the boats; and so we four sat down to breathe, while Long John, mopping his face, came slowly up with us.

"Thank ye kindly, doctor," says he. "You came in in about the nick, I guess, for me and Hawkins. And so it's you, Ben Gunn!" he added. "Well, you're a nice one to be sure."

"I'm Ben Gunn, I am," replied the maroon, wriggling like an eel in his embarrassment. "And," he added, after a long pause, "how do, Mr. Silver? Pretty well, I thank ye, says you."

"Ben, Ben," murmured Silver, "to think as you've done me!"

The doctor sent back Gray for one of the pickaxes, deserted, in their flight, by the mutineers; and then as we proceeded leisurely down

hill to where the boats were lying, related, in a few words, what had taken place. It was a story that profoundly interested Silver; and Ben Gunn, the half-idiot maroon, was the hero from beginning to end.

Ben, in his long, lonely wanderings about the island, had found the skeleton—it was he that had rifled it; he had found the treasure; he had dug it up (it was the haft of his pickaxe that lay broken in the excavation); he had carried it on his back, in many weary journeys, from the foot of the tall pine to a cave he had on the two-pointed hill at the north-east angle of the island, and there it had lain stored in safety since two months before the arrival of the *Hispaniola.*

When the doctor had wormed this secret from him, on the afternoon of the attack, and when, next morning, he saw the anchorage deserted, he had gone to Silver, given him the chart, which was now useless—given him the stores, for Ben Gunn's cave was well supplied with goat's meat salted by himself—given anything and everything to get a chance of moving in safety from the stockade to the two-pointed hill, there to be clear of malaria and keep a guard upon the money.

"As for you, Jim," he said, "it went against my heart, but I did what I thought best for those who had stood by their duty; and if you were not one of these, whose fault was it?"

That morning, finding that I was to be involved in the horrid disappointment he had prepared for the mutineers, he had run all the way to the cave, and, leaving the squire to guard the captain, had taken Gray and the maroon, and started, making the diagonal across the island, to be at hand beside the pine. Soon, however, he saw that our party had the start of him; and Ben Gunn, being fleet of foot, had been despatched in front to do his best alone. Then it had occurred to him to work upon the superstitions of his former shipmates; and he was so far successful that Gray and the doctor had come up and were already ambushed before the arrival of the treasure-hunters.

"Ah," said Silver, "it were fortunate for me that I had Hawkins here. You would have let old John be cut to bits, and never given it a thought, doctor."

"Not a thought," replied Dr. Livesey, cheerily.

And by this time we had reached the gigs. The doctor, with a pickaxe, demolished one of them, and then we all got aboard the other, and set out to go round by sea for North Inlet.

This was a run of eight or nine miles. Silver, though he was almost killed already with fatigue, was set to an oar, like the rest of us, and we were soon skimming swiftly over a smooth sea. Soon we passed out of the straits and doubled

the south-east corner of the island, round which, four days ago, we had towed the *Hispaniola*.

As we passed the two-pointed hill, we could see the black mouth of Ben Gunn's cave, and a figure standing by it, leaning on a musket. It was the squire; and we waved a handkerchief and gave him three cheers in which the voice of Silver joined as heartily as any.

Three miles farther, just inside the mouth of North Inlet, what should we meet but the *Hispaniola*, cruising by herself? The last flood had lifted her; and had there been much wind, or a strong tide current, as in the southern anchorage, we should never have found her more, or found her stranded beyond help. As it was, there was little amiss, beyond the wreck of the main-sail. Another anchor was got ready, and dropped in a fathom and a half of water. We all pulled round again to Rum Cove, the nearest point for Ben Gunn's treasure-house; and then Gray, single-handed, returned with the gig to the *Hispaniola*, where he was to pass the night on guard.

A gentle slope ran up from the beach to the entrance of the cave. At the top, the squire met us. To me he was cordial and kind, saying nothing of my escapade, either in the way of blame or praise. At Silver's polite salute he somewhat flushed.

"John Silver," he said, "you're a prodigious villain and impostor—a monstrous impostor,

sir. I am told I am not to prosecute you. Well, then, I will not. But the dead men, sir, hang about your neck like millstones."

"Thank you kindly, sir," replied Long John, again saluting.

"I dare you to thank me!" cried the squire. "It is a gross dereliction of my duty. Stand back."

And thereupon we all entered the cave. It was a large, airy place, with a little spring and a pool of clear water, overhung with ferns. The floor was sand. Before a big fire lay Captain Smollett; and in a far corner, only duskily flickered over by the blaze, I beheld great heaps of coin and quadrilaterals built of bars of gold. That was Flint's treasure that we had come so far to seek, and that had cost already the lives of seventeen men from the *Hispaniola*. How many it had cost in the amassing, what blood and sorrow, what good ships scuttled on the deep, what brave men walking the plank blindfold, what shot of cannon, what shame and lies and cruelty, perhaps no man alive could tell. Yet there were still three upon that island—Silver, and old Morgan, and Ben Gunn—who had each taken his share in these crimes, as each had hoped in vain to share in the reward.

"Come in, Jim," said the captain. "You're a good boy in your line, Jim; but I don't think you and me'll go to sea again. You're too much of the born favourite for me. Is

that you, John Silver? What brings you here, man?"

"Come back to my dooty, sir," returned Silver.

"Ah!" said the captain; and that was all he said.

What a supper I had of it that night, with all my friends around me; and what a meal it was, with Ben Gunn's salted goat, and some delicacies and a bottle of old wine from the *Hispaniola*. Never, I am sure, were people gayer or happier. And there was Silver, sitting back almost out of the firelight, but eating heartily, prompt to spring forward when anything was wanted, even joining quietly in our laughter—the same bland, polite, obsequious seaman of the voyage out.

CHAPTER XXXIV

AND LAST

THE next morning we fell early to work, for the transportation of this great mass of gold near a mile by land to the beach, and thence three miles by boat to the *Hispaniola*, was a considerable task for so small a number of workmen. The three fellows still abroad upon the island did not greatly trouble us; a single sentry on the shoulder of the hill was sufficient to insure us against any sudden onslaught, and we thought, besides, they had had more than enough of fighting.

Therefore the work was pushed on briskly. Gray and Ben Gunn came and went with the boat, while the rest, during their absences, piled treasure on the beach. Two of the bars, slung in a rope's-end, made a good load for a grown man—one that he was glad to walk slowly with. For my part, as I was not much use at carrying, I was kept busy all day in the cave, packing the minted money into bread-bags.

It was a strange collection, like Billy Bones's

hoard for the diversity of coinage, but so much larger and so much more varied that I think I never had more pleasure than in sorting them. English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Georges, and Louises, doubloons and double guineas and moidores and sequins, the pictures of all the kings of Europe for the last hundred years, strange Oriental pieces stamped with what looked like wisps of string or bits of spider's web, round pieces and square pieces, and pieces bored through the middle, as if to wear them round your neck—nearly every variety of money in the world must, I think, have found a place in that collection; and for number, I am sure they were like autumn leaves, so that my back ached with stooping and my fingers with sorting them out.

Day after day this work went on; by every evening a fortune had been stowed aboard, but there was another fortune waiting for the morrow; and all this time we heard nothing of the three surviving mutineers.

At last—I think it was on the third night—the doctor and I were strolling on the shoulder of the hill where it overlooks the lowlands of the isle, when, from out the thick darkness below, the wind brought us a noise between shrieking and singing. It was only a snatch that reached our ears, followed by the former silence.

"Heaven forgive them," said the doctor, "'tis the mutineers!"

"All drunk, sir," struck in the voice of Silver from behind us.

Silver, I should say, was allowed his entire liberty, and, in spite of daily rebuffs, seemed to regard himself once more as quite a privileged and friendly dependant. Indeed, it was remarkable how well he bore these slights, and with what unwearying politeness he kept on trying to ingratiate himself with all. Yet, I think, none treated him better than a dog; unless it was Ben Gunn, who was still terribly afraid of his old quartermaster, or myself, who had really something to thank him for; although, for that matter, I suppose, I had reason to think even worse of him than anybody else, for I had seen him meditating a fresh treachery upon the plateau. Accordingly, it was pretty gruffly that the doctor answered him.

"Drunk or raving," said he.

"Right you were, sir," replied Silver; "and precious little odds which, to you and me."

"I suppose you would hardly ask me to call you a humane man," returned the doctor, with a sneer, "and so my feelings may surprise you, Master Silver. But if I were sure they were raving—as I am morally certain one, at least, of them is down with fever—I should leave this camp, and at whatever risk to my own carcass, take them the assistance of my skill."

"Ask your pardon, sir, you would be very wrong," quoth Silver. "You would lose your

precious life, and you may lay to that. I'm on your side now, hand and glove; and I shouldn't wish for to see the party weakened, let alone yourself, seeing as I know what I owes you. But these men down there, they couldn't keep their word—no, not supposing they wished to; and what's more, they couldn't believe as you could."

"No," said the doctor. "You're the man to keep your word, we know that."

Well, that was about the last news we had of the three pirates. Only once we heard a gunshot a great way off, and supposed them to be hunting. A council was held, and it was decided that we must desert them on the island—to the huge glee, I must say, of Ben Gunn, and with the strong approval of Gray. We left a good stock of powder and shot, the bulk of the salt goat, a few medicines, and some other necessaries, tools, clothing, a spare sail, a fathom or two of rope, and, by the particular desire of the doctor, a handsome present of tobacco.

That was about our last doing on the island. Before that, we had got the treasure stowed, and had shipped enough water and the remainder of the goat meat, in case of any distress; and at last, one fine morning, we weighed anchor, which was about all that we could manage, and stood out of North Inlet, the same colours flying that the captain had flown and fought under at the palisade.

The three fellows must have been watching us closer than we thought for, as we soon had proved. For coming through the narrows, we had to lie very near the southern point, and there we saw all three of them kneeling together on a spit of sand, with their arms raised in supplication. It went to all our hearts, I think, to leave them in that wretched state; but we could not risk another mutiny; and to take them home for the gibbet would have been a cruel sort of kindness. The doctor hailed them and told them of the stores we had left, and where they were to find them. But they continued to call us by name, and appeal to us, for God's sake, to be merciful, and not leave them to die in such a place.

At last, seeing the ship still bore on her course, and was now swiftly drawing out of earshot, one of them—I know not which it was—leapt to his feet with a hoarse cry, whipped his musket to his shoulder, and sent a shot whistling over Silver's head and through the main-sail.

After that, we kept under cover of the bulwarks, and when next I looked out they had disappeared from the spit, and the spit itself had almost melted out of sight in the growing distance. That was, at least, the end of that; and before noon, to my inexpressible joy, the highest rock of Treasure Island had sunk into the blue round of sea.

We were so short of men, that every one on

board had to bear a hand—only the captain lying on a mattress in the stern and giving his orders; for, though greatly recovered he was still in want of quiet. We laid her head for the nearest port in Spanish America, for we could not risk the voyage home without fresh hands; and as it was, what with baffling winds and a couple of fresh gales, we were all worn out before we reached it.

It was just at sundown when we cast anchor in a most beautiful land-locked gulf, and were immediately surrounded by shore boats full of negroes, and Mexican Indians, and half-bloods, selling fruits and vegetables, and offering to dive for bits of money. The sight of so many good-humoured faces (especially the blacks), the taste of the tropical fruits, and above all, the lights that began to shine in the town, made a most charming contrast to our dark and bloody sojourn on the island; and the doctor and the squire, taking me along with them, went ashore to pass the early part of the night. Here they met the captain of an English man-of-war, fell in talk with him, went on board his ship, and, in short, had so agreeable a time, that day was breaking when we came alongside the *Hispaniola*.

Ben Gunn was on deck alone, and, as soon as we came on board, he began, with wonderful contortions, to make us a confession. Silver was gone. The maroon had connived at his escape in a shore boat some hours ago, and he

now assured us he had only done so to preserve our lives, which would certainly have been forfeit if "that man with the one leg had stayed aboard. But this was not all." The sea cook had not gone empty-handed. He had cut through a bulkhead unobserved, and had removed one of the sacks of coin, worth, perhaps, three or four hundred guineas, to help him on his further wanderings.

I think we were all pleased to be so cheaply quit of him.

Well, to make a long story short, we got a few hands on board, made a good cruise home, and the *Hispaniola* reached Bristol just as Mr. Blandly was beginning to think of fitting out her consort. Five men only of those who had sailed returned with her. "Drink and the devil had done for the rest," with a vengeance; although, to be sure, we were not quite in so bad a case as that other ship they sang about:

> "With one man of her crew alive,
> What put to sea with seventy-five."

All of us had an ample share of the treasure, and used it wisely or foolishly, according to our natures. Captain Smollett is now retired from the sea. Gray not only saved his money, but, being suddenly smit with the desire to rise, also studied his profession; and he is now mate and part owner of a fine full-rigged ship; married besides, and the father of a family. As for Ben

Gunn, he got a thousand pounds, which he spent or lost in three weeks, or, to be more exact, in nineteen days, for he was back begging on the twentieth. Then he was given a lodge to keep, exactly as he had feared upon the island; and he still lives, a great favourite, though something of a butt, with the country boys, and a notable singer in church on Sundays and saints' days.

Of Silver we have heard no more. That formidable seafaring man with one leg has at last gone clean out of my life; but I daresay he met his old negress, and perhaps still lives in comfort with her and Captain Flint. It is to be hoped so, I suppose, for his chances of comfort in another world are very small.

The bar silver and the arms still lie, for all that I know, where Flint buried them; and certainly they shall lie there for me. Oxen and wain-ropes would not bring me back again to that accursed island; and the worst dreams that ever I have are when I hear the surf booming about its coasts, or start upright in bed, with the sharp voice of Captain Flint still ringing in my ears: "Pieces of eight! pieces of eight!"

PRINCE OTTO

A ROMANCE

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PREFATORY NOTE

PRINCE OTTO, as my husband has said, was projected in California, but was not taken up seriously until the year 1883, when we were living in the little châlet, La Solitude, in Hyères. The labour that went into the making of the book was greater than he ever expended over any other novel, either before or after. This story, fantastic and artificial to a degree, demanded a style to correspond. The high key of its beginning was difficult to maintain and proved somewhat of a strain. It was the last effort of his earlier manner. My husband often said, in later years, that he had outlived this style and would be at a loss to regain it were he to attempt another book of the same character.

Prince Otto was originally modelled on the character of his cousin, Robert Alan Stevenson, but fell insensibly into what my husband conceived himself. In some respects his friends could detect a superficial resemblance, but the fundamental character of the man was not there. Otto shirked responsibility—my husband courted it. Gondremark

could never have laid his hands on the reins of government in Grünewald had Robert Louis Stevenson been the reigning prince. Otto, the gentle philosopher, preferred a life of peace and comfortable domesticity. My husband, on the contrary, was of a bolder spirit, and looked upon peace and comfort as stumbling-blocks for the soul. During one of the many wars in Samoa a *tala* (gossiping tale) was circulated through the country that Tusitala was acting as secret military adviser to the native army that had just suffered a defeat. When this was repeated to my husband he threw up his head and his eyes blazed. "What sort of an incompetent do the white men of Apia take me for?" he said; "I'm tempted to show them the kind of leader I'd make—— Oh, if I only could!" and he began drawing strategic plans on his writing-table to prove how easily the A'anas might have marched on to victory.

It was fortunate for the world of letters that my husband was a semi-invalid all his life; when he read for his own pleasure, he preferred technical books on military tactics, the margins of which were covered with his annotations. During Lord Wolseley's Nile campaign, when he happened to be in tolerable health, he seriously contemplated the idea of going to the front as a war correspondent.

It never seemed to me that either my husband or Robert Alan Stevenson quite belonged to their

century. In some indefinable way they differed in appearance from the majority of mankind as much as they differed in character. This is the only explanation I can find for the singular descriptions of my husband's habiliments that have gained general credence. He *looked* as though he would naturally be clad in something picturesque and unusual, having a gallant bearing with an alert grace of movement that is seldom seen except in half-civilised countries. He used many gestures in speaking, was of a dark, ruddy complexion, and quick and fiery of temper. "Something royal, ain't it?" was the audible comment of a negro waiter on a Newport boat. I imagine even this negro waiter had a picture in his mind of sashes and cloaks, and jewelled stilettos; whereas the supposedly royal personage was clad in ordinary blue serge.

I have just read with amazement that "Mr. Stevenson wore skin-tight nankin pants, Wellington boots, a black shirt, a white sombrero, and a sealskin cape fastened by a fancy brooch which held a bunch of daffodils!" I may have the order wrong, but these were the articles enumerated,—a costume that could have been worn only by a maniac, and certainly not by my husband. It is strange how such tales take hold of the imagination and grow with the telling. Within the last few months a man said to me, "I knew Mr. Stevenson well in Manasquan. I can see him now, in my mind's eye, just

as he looked in his nankin pants and red sash!" In a recent, otherwise excellent, article the author speaks of "Stevenson's intolerable affectation in dress." There was more excuse for the captain of a passenger ship. "Mr. Stevenson," he said, "came aboard my vessel in his cow-boy rig, with his long boots on!" The truth being that my husband rode to the wharf on horseback in conventional riding costume.

In my husband's early years he earned very little money, although he had a small allowance from his father,—sufficient for at least a modest wardrobe. It was only by exercising the closest economy that he could save anything for an invalid friend whose need he considered greater than his own. He bought his clothes of the cheapest material, at the cheapest shops, and wore them until they were so shabby that his friends, not knowing the circumstances, remonstrated, thinking that the son of a comparatively rich father should make a better appearance. When his funds were once at the lowest ebb his father presented him with a velvet smoking-jacket. It lasted a long while, and, worn on all occasions, to the scandal of the community, it saved the expense of other more conventional coats.

It was while we were living in Bournemouth, in the beginning of the fashion of amateur photography, that most of the photographs of my husband were taken. At that time his health was at the

worst, and his friends were eager to get some likeness of him before, as they feared, it would be too late. The hemorrhages were almost incessant, and the consequent debility made it very difficult for him to sit for a photograph. The English climate is treacherous, and even in Bournemouth we had to exercise the utmost caution in guarding the invalid from draughts and cold. The doctor would not allow my husband even to have his hair cut unless both the state of his health and the weather were propitious. The photographs mark these changes like a barometer. A likeness with long hair meant a severe illness; all those taken in Samoa, where he enjoyed the best health of his life, show him with his hair cut short. While he sat for these photographs I stood near, guarding him from fatigue or draughts as much as possible. Sometimes the unexpected opening of a door would send a chill into the room, when I would snatch anything at hand to throw about his shoulders. These details may seem trivial, as indeed they are; but my husband has been so persistently described as a *poseur* in dress that I thought it better to put an end to such foolish inventions.

About the time of the completion of *Prince Otto*, we had several visitors in the little châlet. First came Robert Alan Stevenson, whose remarkable personal attraction alone would have made every moment of his stay a delight to us both; his

talk, of a rare intelligence, witty, wise, gay, full of surprises and extravagances, did my husband more good than all the drugs in the chemist's shop. Then followed Mr. Sidney Colvin, the wise counsellor and sound critic. As these appeared singly, we managed to take them in without bursting the walls of La Solitude; but when Mr. Charles Baxter and Mr. W. E. Henley arrived together, we were reluctantly compelled to engage sleeping-rooms for them at the hotel.

These visits would have been pleasant enough anywhere, but breaking into our secluded life as they did, and bringing the atmosphere of the outside world into our little hermitage, they were delightful indeed. I can remember few things more exciting than the evenings we spent with Mr. Colvin, inventing a play to be called *The Arethusa*. The exhilaration of the society of Mr. Baxter and Mr. Henley led my husband, in an evil moment, to propose an expedition to Nice. There he took a cold which developed into pneumonia. He was in imminent danger for many weeks, and returned to Hyères desperately ill.

Prince Otto, meanwhile, had started on his pilgrimage through the world of letters, not without some preliminary embarrassments. My husband was asked by Mr. Longmans to put a price on his work. With much perturbation he answered, naming a sum absurdly small. I insisted that this

should be changed to a larger amount; but how earnestly I wished I had not interfered when days passed without a word in reply. My husband's mortification was acute. He said he felt like a cheat, and turned cold when he remembered that he had demanded two hundred and fifty pounds for the serial rights of a tale the publishers apparently thought worth nothing at all. He actually had the pen in his hand to write a telegram retracting the terms in his letter when a hurried note arrived from Messrs. Longmans, saying that they considered two hundred and fifty pounds a very moderate price for the story, which should go to press immediately.

F. V. DE G. S.

TO

NELLY VAN DE GRIFT

(Mrs. Adulfo Sanchez, of Monterey)

At last, after so many years, I have the pleasure of re-introducing you to Prince Otto, *whom you will remember a very little fellow, no bigger in fact than a few sheets of memoranda written for me by your kind hand. The sight of his name will carry you back to an old wooden house embowered in creepers; a house that was far gone in the respectable stages of antiquity and seemed indissoluble from the green garden in which it stood, and that yet was a sea-traveller in its younger days, and had come round the Horn piecemeal in the belly of a ship, and might have heard the seamen stamping and shouting and the note of the boatswain's whistle. It will recall to you the nondescript inhabitants now so widely scattered:—the two horses, the dog, and the four cats, some of*

them still looking in your face as you read these lines;—the poor lady, so unfortunately married to an author;—the China boy, by this time, perhaps, baiting his line by the banks of a river in the Flowery Land;—and in particular the Scot who was then sick apparently unto death, and whom you did so much to cheer and keep in good behaviour.

You may remember that he was full of ambitions and designs: so soon as he had his health again completely, you may remember the fortune he was to earn, the journeys he was to go upon, the delights he was to enjoy and confer, and (among other matters) the masterpiece he was to make of Prince Otto!

Well, we will not give in that we are finally beaten. We read together in those days the story of Braddock, and how, as he was carried dying from the scene of his defeat, he promised himself to do better another time: a story that will always touch a brave heart, and a dying speech worthy of a more fortunate commander. I try to be of Braddock's mind. I still mean to get my health again; I still purpose, by hook or crook, this book or the next, to launch a masterpiece; and I still intend

—somehow, some time or other—to see your face and to hold your hand.

Meanwhile, this little paper traveller goes forth instead, crosses the great seas and the long plains and the dark mountains, and comes at last to your door in Monterey, charged with tender greetings. Pray you, take him in. He comes from a house where (even as in your own) there are gathered together some of the waifs of our company of Oakland; a house—for all its outlandish Gaelic name and distant station—where you are well-beloved.

R. L. S.

Skerryvore,
Bournemouth.

BOOK I
PRINCE ERRANT

CHAPTER I

IN WHICH THE PRINCE DEPARTS ON AN ADVENTURE

YOU shall seek in vain upon the map of Europe for the bygone state of Grünewald. An independent principality, an infinitesimal member of the German Empire, she played, for several centuries, her part in the discord of Europe; and, at last, in the ripeness of time and at the spiriting of several bald diplomatists, vanished like a morning ghost. Less fortunate than Poland, she left not a regret behind her; and the very memory of her boundaries has faded.

It was a patch of hilly country covered with thick wood. Many streams took their beginning in the glens of Grünewald, turning mills for the inhabitants. There was one town, Mittwalden, and many brown, wooden hamlets, climbing roof above roof, along the steep bottom of dells, and communicating by covered bridges over the larger of the torrents. The hum of water-

mills, the splash of running water, the clean odour of pine sawdust, the sound and the smell of the pleasant wind among the innumerable army of the mountain pines, the dropping fire of huntsmen, the dull stroke of the woodaxe, intolerable roads, fresh trout for supper in the clean bare chamber of an inn, and the song of birds and the music of the village-bells—these were the recollections of the Grünewald tourist.

North and east the foothills of Grünewald sank with varying profile into a vast plain. On these sides many small states bordered with the principality, Gerolstein, an extinct grand duchy, among the number. On the south it marched with the comparatively powerful kingdom of Seaboard Bohemia, celebrated for its flowers and mountain bears, and inhabited by a people of singular simplicity and tenderness of heart. Several intermarriages had, in the course of centuries, united the crowned families of Grünewald and maritime Bohemia; and the last Prince of Grünewald, whose history I purpose to relate, drew his descent through Perdita, the only daughter of King Florizel the First of Bohemia. That these intermarriages had in some degree mitigated the rough, manly stock of the first Grünewalds, was an opinion widely held within the borders of the principality. The charcoal burner, the mountain sawyer, the wielder of the broad axe among the congregated pines of Grünewald, proud of their hard hands, proud

of their shrewd ignorance and almost savage lore, looked with an unfeigned contempt on the soft character and manners of the sovereign race.

The precise year of grace in which this tale begins shall be left to the conjecture of the reader. But for the season of the year (which, in such a story, is the more important of the two) it was already so far forward in the spring, that when mountain people heard horns echoing all day about the north-west corner of the principality, they told themselves that Prince Otto and his hunt were up and out for the last time till the return of autumn.

At this point the borders of Grünewald descend somewhat steeply, here and there breaking into crags; and this shaggy and trackless country stands in a bold contrast to the cultivated plain below. It was traversed at that period by two roads alone; one, the imperial highway, bound to Brandenau in Gerolstein, descended the slope obliquely and by the easiest gradients. The other ran like a fillet across the very forehead of the hills, dipping into savage gorges, and wetted by the spray of tiny waterfalls. Once it passed beside a certain tower or castle, built sheer upon the margin of a formidable cliff, and commanding a vast prospect of the skirts of Grünewald and the busy plains of Gerolstein. The Felsenburg (so this tower was called) served now as a prison, now as a

hunting-seat; and for all it stood so lonesome to the naked eye, with the aid of a good glass the burghers of Brandenau could count its windows from the lime-tree terrace where they walked at night.

In the wedge of forest hillside enclosed between the roads, the horns continued all day long to scatter tumult; and at length, as the sun began to draw near to the horizon of the plain, a rousing triumph announced the slaughter of the quarry. The first and second huntsman had drawn somewhat aside, and from the summit of a knoll gazed down before them on the drooping shoulders of the hill and across the expanse of plain. They covered their eyes, for the sun was in their faces. The glory of its going down was somewhat pale. Through the confused tracery of many thousands of naked poplars, the smoke of so many houses, and the evening steam ascending from the fields, the sails of a windmill on a gentle eminence moved very conspicuously, like a donkey's ears. And hard by, like an open gash, the imperial highroad ran straight sunward, an artery of travel.

There is one of nature's spiritual ditties, that has not yet been set to words or human music: "The Invitation to the Road"; an air continually sounding in the ears of gipsies, and to whose inspiration our nomadic fathers journeyed all their days. The hour, the season, and the scene, all were in delicate accordance. The air was

full of birds of passage, steering westward and northward over Grünewald, an army of specks to the up-looking eye. And below, the great practicable road was bound for the same quarter.

But to the two horsemen on the knoll this spiritual ditty was unheard. They were, indeed, in some concern of mind, scanning every fold of the subjacent forest, and betraying both anger and dismay in their impatient gestures.

"I do not see him, Kuno," said the first huntsman, "nowhere—not a trace, not a hair of the mare's tail! No, sir, he's off, broke cover and got away. Why, for twopence I would hunt him with the dogs!"

"Mayhap, he's gone home," said Kuno, but without conviction.

"Home!" sneered the other. "I give him twelve days to get home. No, it's begun again; it's as it was three years ago, before he married; a disgrace! Hereditary prince, hereditary fool! There goes the government over the borders on a grey mare. What's that? No, nothing—no, I tell you, on my word, I set more store by a good gelding or an English dog. That for your Otto!"

"He's not my Otto," growled Kuno.

"Then I don't know whose he is," was the retort.

"You would put your hand in the fire for him to-morrow," said Kuno, facing round.

"Me!" cried the huntsman. "I would see

him hanged! I'm a Grünewald patriot—enrolled, and have my medal, too; and I would help a prince! I'm for liberty and Gondremark."

"Well, it's all one," said Kuno. "If anybody said what you said, you would have his blood, and you know it."

"You have him on the brain," retorted his companion. "There he goes!" he cried, the next moment.

And sure enough, about a mile down the mountain, a rider on a white horse was seen to flit rapidly across a heathy open and vanish among the trees on the farther side.

"In ten minutes he'll be over the border into Gerolstein," said Kuno. "It's past cure."

"Well, if he founders that mare, I'll never forgive him," added the other, gathering his reins.

And as they turned down from the knoll to rejoin their comrades, the sun dipped and disappeared, and the woods fell instantly into the gravity and greyness of the early night.

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH THE PRINCE PLAYS HAROUN-AL-RASCHID

THE night fell upon the Prince while he was threading green tracks in the lower valleys of the wood; and though the stars came out overhead and displayed the interminable order of the pine-tree pyramids, regular and dark like cypresses, their light was of small service to a traveller in such lonely paths, and from thenceforth he rode at random. The austere face of nature, the uncertain issue of his course, the open sky and the free air, delighted him like wine; and the hoarse chafing of a river on his left sounded in his ears agreeably.

It was past eight at night before his toil was rewarded and he issued at last out of the forest on the firm white highroad. It lay down hill before him, with a sweeping eastward trend, faintly bright between the thickets; and Otto paused and gazed upon it. So it ran, league after league, still joining others, to the farthest ends of Europe, there skirting the sea-surge, here gleaming in the lights of cities; and the in-

numerable army of tramps and travellers moved upon it in all lands as by a common impulse, and were now in all places drawing near to the inn-door and the night's rest. The pictures swarmed and vanished in his brain; a surge of temptation, a beat of all his blood, went over him, to set spur to the mare and to go on into the unknown for ever. And then it passed away; hunger and fatigue, and that habit of middling actions which we call common sense, resumed their empire; and in that changed mood, his eye lighted upon two bright windows on his left hand, between the road and river.

He turned off by a by-road, and in a few minutes he was knocking with his whip on the door of a large farmhouse, and a chorus of dogs from the farmyard were making angry answer. A very tall, old white-headed man came, shading a candle, at the summons. He had been of great strength in his time, and of a handsome countenance; but now he was fallen away, his teeth were quite gone, and his voice when he spoke was broken and falsetto.

"You will pardon me," said Otto. "I am a traveller and have entirely lost my way."

"Sir," said the old man, in a very stately, shaky manner, "you are at the River Farm, and I am Killian Gottesheim, at your disposal. We are here, sir, at about an equal distance from Mittwalden in Grünewald and Brandenau in Gerolstein: six leagues to either, and the road

excellent; but there is not a wine bush, not a carter's alehouse, anywhere between. You will have to accept my hospitality for the night; rough hospitality, to which I make you freely welcome; for, sir," he added with a bow, "it is God who sends the guest."

"Amen. And I most heartily thank you," replied Otto, bowing in his turn.

"Fritz," said the old man, turning towards the interior, "lead round this gentleman's horse; and you, sir, condescend to enter."

Otto entered a chamber occupying the greater part of the ground-floor of the building. It had probably once been divided; for the farther end was raised by a long step above the nearer, and the blazing fire and the white supper-table seemed to stand upon a daïs. All around were dark, brass-mounted cabinets and cupboards; dark shelves carrying ancient country crockery; guns and antlers and broadside ballads on the wall; a tall old clock with roses on the dial; and down in one corner the comfortable promise of a wine barrel. It was homely, elegant, and quaint.

A powerful youth hurried out to attend on the grey mare; and when Mr. Killian Gottesheim had presented him to his daughter Ottilia, Otto followed to the stable as became, not perhaps the Prince, but the good horseman. When he returned, a smoking omelette and some slices of home-cured ham were waiting him; these

were followed by a ragout and a cheese; and it was not until his guest had entirely satisfied his hunger, and the whole party drew about the fire over the wine jug, that Killian Gottesheim's elaborate courtesy permitted him to address a question to the Prince.

"You have perhaps ridden far, sir?" he inquired.

"I have, as you say, ridden far," replied Otto; "and, as you have seen, I was prepared to do justice to your daughter's cookery."

"Possibly, sir, from the direction of Brandenau?" continued Killian.

"Precisely: and I should have slept to-night, had I not wandered, in Mittwalden," answered the Prince, weaving in a patch of truth, according to the habit of all liars.

"Business leads you to Mittwalden?" was the next question.

"Mere curiosity," said Otto. "I have never yet visited the principality of Grünewald."

"A pleasant state, sir," piped the old man, nodding, "a very pleasant state, and a fine race, both pines and people. We reckon ourselves part Grünewalders here, lying so near the borders; and the river there is all good Grünewald water, every drop of it. Yes, sir, a fine state. A man of Grünewald now will swing me an axe over his head that many a man of Gerolstein could hardly lift; and the pines, why, deary me, there must be more pines in that little state,

sir, than people in this whole big world. 'Tis twenty years now since I crossed the marshes, for we grow home-keepers in old age; but I mind it as if it was yesterday. Up and down, the road keeps right on from here to Mittwalden; and nothing all the way but the good green pine-trees, big and little, and water power! water power at every step, sir. We once sold a bit of forest, up there beside the high-road; and the sight of minted money that we got for it, has set me ciphering ever since what all the pines in Grünewald would amount to."

"I suppose you see nothing of the Prince?" inquired Otto.

"No," said the young man, speaking for the first time, "nor want to."

"Why so? is he so much disliked?" asked Otto.

"Not what you might call disliked," replied the old gentleman, "but despised, sir."

"Indeed," said the Prince, somewhat faintly.

"Yes, sir, despised," nodded Killian, filling a long pipe, "and, to my way of thinking, justly despised. Here is a man with great opportunities, and what does he do with them? He hunts, and he dresses very prettily—which is a thing to be ashamed of in a man—and he acts plays; and if he does aught else, the news of it has not come here."

"Yet these are all innocent," said Otto. "What would you have him do—make war?"

"No, sir," replied the old man. "But here it is; I have been fifty years upon this River Farm, and wrought in it, day in, day out; I have ploughed and sowed and reaped, and risen early, and waked late; and this is the upshot: that all these years it has supported me and my family; and been the best friend that ever I had, set aside my wife; and now, when my time comes, I leave it a better farm than when I found it. So it is, if a man works hearty in the order of nature, he gets bread and he receives comfort, and whatever he touches breeds. And it humbly appears to me, if that Prince was to labour on his throne, as I have laboured and wrought in my farm, he would find both an increase and a blessing."

"I believe with you, sir," Otto said; "and yet the parallel is inexact. For the farmer's life is natural and simple; but the prince's is both artificial and complicated. It is easy to do right in the one, and exceedingly difficult not to do wrong in the other. If your crop is blighted, you can take off your bonnet and say, 'God's will be done'; but if the prince meets with a reverse, he may have to blame himself for the attempt. And perhaps, if all the kings in Europe were to confine themselves to innocent amusement, the subjects would be the better off."

"Ay," said the young man Fritz, "you are in the right of it there. That was a true word

spoken. And I see you are like me, a good patriot and an enemy to princes."

Otto was somewhat abashed at this deduction, and he made haste to change his ground. "But," said he, "you surprise me by what you say of this Prince Otto. I have heard him, I must own, more favourably painted. I was told he was, in his heart, a good fellow, and the enemy of no one but himself."

"And so he is, sir," said the girl, "a very handsome, pleasant prince; and we know some who would shed their blood for him."

"O! Kuno!" said Fritz. "An ignoramus!"

"Ay, Kuno, to be sure," quavered the old farmer. "Well, since this gentleman is a stranger to these parts, and curious about the Prince, I do believe that story might divert him. This Kuno, you must know, sir, is one of the hunt servants, and a most ignorant, intemperate man: a right Grünewalder, as we say in Gerolstein. We know him well, in this house; for he has come as far as here after his stray dogs; and I make all welcome, sir, without account of state or nation. And, indeed, between Gerolstein and Grünewald the peace has held so long that the roads stand open like my door; and a man will make no more of the frontier than the very birds themselves."

"Ay," said Otto, "it has been a long peace—a peace of centuries."

"Centuries, as you say," returned Killian:

"the more the pity that it should not be for ever. Well, sir, this Kuno was one day in fault, and Otto, who has a quick temper, up with his whip and thrashed him, they do say, soundly. Kuno took it as best he could, but at last he broke out, and dared the Prince to throw his whip away and wrestle like a man; for we are all great at wrestling in these parts, and it's so that we generally settle our disputes. Well, sir, the Prince did so; and being a weakly creature found the tables turned; for the man whom he had just been thrashing like a negro slave, lifted him with a back grip and threw him heels overhead."

"He broke his bridle-arm," cried Fritz—"and some say his nose. Serve him right, say I! Man to man, which is the better at that?"

"And then?" asked Otto.

"Oh, then, Kuno carried him home; and they were the best of friends from that day forth. I don't say it's a discreditable story, you observe," continued Mr. Gottesheim; "but it's droll, and that's the fact. A man should think before he strikes; for, as my nephew says, man to man was the old valuation."

"Now, if you were to ask me," said Otto, "I should perhaps surprise you. I think it was the Prince that conquered."

"And, sir, you would be right," replied Killian, seriously. "In the eyes of God, I do not ques-

tion but you would be right; but men, sir, look at these things differently, and they laugh."

"They made a song of it," observed Fritz. "How does it go? Ta-tum-ta-ra. . . ."

"Well," interrupted Otto, who had no great anxiety to hear the song, "the Prince is young; he may yet mend."

"Not so young, by your leave," cried Fritz. "A man of forty."

"Thirty-six," corrected Mr. Gottesheim.

"Oh," cried Ottilia, in obvious disillusion, "a man of middle age! And they said he was so handsome when he was young!"

"And bald, too," added Fritz.

Otto passed his hand among his locks. At that moment he was far from happy, and even the tedious evenings at Mittwalden Palace began to smile upon him by comparison.

"O, six-and-thirty!" he protested. "A man is not yet old at six-and-thirty. I am that age myself."

"I should have taken you for more, sir," piped the old farmer. "But if that be so, you are of an age with Master Ottekin, as people call him; and I would wager a crown, have done more service in your time. Though it seems young by comparison with men of a great age like me, yet it's some way through life for all that; and the mere fools and fiddlers are beginning to grow weary and to look old. Yes, sir, by six-and-thirty, if a man be a follower of God's

laws, he should have made himself a home and a good name to live by; he should have got a wife and a blessing on his marriage; and his works, as the Word says, should begin to follow him."

"Ah, well, the Prince is married," cried Fritz, with a coarse burst of laughter.

"That seems to entertain you, sir," said Otto.

"Ay," said the young boor. "Did you not know that? I thought all Europe knew it!" And he added a pantomime of a nature to explain his accusation to the dullest.

"Ah, sir," said Mr. Gottesheim, "it is very plain that you are not from hereabouts! But the truth is, that the whole princely family and Court are rips and rascals, not one to mend another. They live, sir, in idleness and—what most commonly follows it—corruption. The Princess has a lover; a Baron, as he calls himself, from East Prussia; and the Prince is so little of a man, sir, that he holds the candle. Nor is that the worst of it, for this foreigner and his paramour are suffered to transact the State affairs, while the Prince takes the salary and leaves all things to go to wrack. There will follow upon this some manifest judgment which, though I am old, I may survive to see."

"Good man, you are in the wrong about Gondremark," said Fritz, showing a greatly increased animation; "but for all the rest, you speak the God's truth like a good patriot.

As for the Prince, if he would take and strangle his wife, I would forgive him yet."

"Nay, Fritz," said the old man, "that would be to add iniquity to evil. For you perceive, sir," he continued, once more addressing himself to the unfortunate Prince, "this Otto has himself to thank for these disorders. He has his young wife and his principality, and he has sworn to cherish both."

"Sworn at the altar!" echoed Fritz. "But put your faith in princes!"

"Well, sir, he leaves them both to an adventurer from East Prussia," pursued the farmer; "leaves the girl to be seduced and to go on from bad to worse, till her name's become a tap-room by-word, and she not yet twenty; leaves the country to be overtaxed, and bullied with armaments, and jockied into war——"

"War!" cried Otto.

"So they say, sir; those that watch their ongoings, say to war," asseverated Killian. "Well, sir, that is very sad; it is a sad thing for this poor, wicked girl to go down to hell with people's curses; it's a sad thing for a tight little happy country to be misconducted; but whoever may complain, I humbly conceive, sir, that this Otto cannot. What he has worked for, that he has got; and may God have pity on his soul, for a great and a silly sinner's!"

"He has broke his oath; then he is a perjurer. He takes the money and leaves the work; why,

then plainly he's a thief. A cuckold he was before, and a fool by birth. Better me that!" cried Fritz, and snapped his fingers.

"And now, sir, you will see a little," continued the farmer, "why we think so poorly of this Prince Otto. There's such a thing as a man being pious and honest in the private way; and there is such a thing, sir, as a public virtue; but when a man has neither, the Lord lighten him! Even this Gondremark, that Fritz here thinks so much of——"

"Ay," interrupted Fritz, "Gondremark's the man for me. I would we had his like in Gerolstein."

"He is a bad man," said the old farmer, shaking his head; "and there was never good begun by the breach of God's commandments. But so far I will go with you: he is a man that works for what he has."

"I tell you he's the hope of Grünewald," cried Fritz. "He doesn't suit some of your high-and-dry, old, ancient ideas; but he's a downright modern man—a man of the new lights and the progress of the age. He does some things wrong; so they all do; but he has the people's interests next his heart; and you mark me—you, sir, who are a Liberal, and the enemy of all their governments, you please to mark my words—the day will come in Grünewald, when they take out that yellow-headed skulk of a Prince and that dough-faced Messalina

of a Princess, march 'em back foremost over the borders, and proclaim the Baron Gondremark first President. I've heard them say it in a speech. I was at a meeting once at Brandenau and the Mittwalden delegates spoke up for fifteen thousand. Fifteen thousand, all brigaded, and each man with a medal round his neck to rally by. That's all Gondremark."

"Ay, sir, you see what it leads to: wild talk to-day, and wilder doings to-morrow," said the old man. "For there is one thing certain: that this Gondremark has one foot in the Court backstairs, and the other in the Masons' lodges. He gives himself out, sir, for what nowadays they call a patriot: a man from East Prussia!"

"Give himself out!" cried Fritz. "He is! He is to lay by his title as soon as the Republic is declared; I heard it in a speech."

"Lay by Baron to take up President?" returned Killian. "King Log, King Stork. But you'll live longer than I, and you will see the fruits of it."

"Father," whispered Ottilia, pulling at the speaker's coat, "surely the gentleman is ill."

"I beg your pardon," cried the farmer, rewaking to hospitable thoughts; "can I offer you anything?"

"I thank you. I am very weary," answered Otto. "I have presumed upon my strength. If you would show me to a bed, I should be grateful."

"Ottilia, a candle!" said the old man. "Indeed, sir, you look paley. A little cordial water? No? Then follow me, I beseech you, and I will bring you to the stranger's bed. You are not the first by many who has slept well below my roof," continued the old gentleman, mounting the stairs before his guest; "for good food, honest wine, a grateful conscience, and a little pleasant chat before a man retires, are worth all the possets and apothecary's drugs. See, sir," and here he opened a door and ushered Otto into a little whitewashed sleeping-room, "here you are in port. It is small, but it is airy, and the sheets are clean and kept in lavender. The window, too, looks out above the river, and there's no music like a little river's. It plays the same tune (and that's the favourite) over and over again, and yet does not weary of it like men fiddlers. It takes the mind out of doors; and though we should be grateful for good houses, there is, after all, no house like God's out-of-doors. And lastly, sir, it quiets a man down like saying his prayers. So here, sir, I take my kind leave of you until to-morrow; and it is my prayerful wish that you may slumber like a prince."

And the old man, with the twentieth courteous inclination, left his guest alone.

CHAPTER III

IN WHICH THE PRINCE COMFORTS AGE AND BEAUTY AND DELIVERS A LECTURE ON DISCRETION IN LOVE

THE Prince was early abroad: in the time of the first chorus of birds, of the pure and quiet air, of the slanting sunlight and the mile-long shadows. To one who had passed a miserable night, the freshness of that hour was tonic and reviving; to steal a march upon his slumbering fellows, to be the Adam of the coming day, composed and fortified his spirits; and the Prince, breathing deep and pausing as he went, walked in the wet fields beside his shadow, and was glad.

A trellised path led down into the valley of the brook, and he turned to follow it. The stream was a breakneck, boiling Highland river. Hard by the farm, it leaped a little precipice in a thick grey-mare's tail of twisted filaments, and then lay and worked and bubbled in a lynn. Into the middle of this quaking pool a rock protruded, shelving to a cape; and thither Otto scrambled and sat down to ponder.

Soon the sun struck through the screen of

branches and thin early leaves that made a hanging bower above the fall; and the golden lights and flitting shadows fell upon and marbled the surface of that seething pot; and rays plunged deep among the turning waters; and a spark, as bright as a diamond, lit upon the swaying eddy. It began to grow warm where Otto lingered, warm and heady; the lights swam, weaving their maze across the shaken pool; on the impending rock, reflections danced like butterflies; and the air was fanned by the waterfall as by a swinging curtain.

Otto, who was weary with tossing and beset with horrid phantoms of remorse and jealousy, instantly fell dead in love with that sun-chequered, echoing corner. Holding his feet, he stared out of a drowsy trance, wondering, admiring, musing, losing his way among uncertain thoughts. There is nothing that so apes the external bearing of free will, as that unconscious bustle, obscurely following liquid laws, with which a river contends among obstructions. It seems the very play of man and destiny, and as Otto pored on these recurrent changes, he grew, by equal steps, the sleepier and the more profound. Eddy and Prince were alike jostled in their purpose, alike anchored by intangible influences in one corner of the world. Eddy and Prince were alike useless, starkly useless, in the cosmology of men. Eddy and Prince—Prince and Eddy.

It is probable he had been some while asleep when a voice recalled him from oblivion. "Sir," it was saying; and looking round, he saw Mr. Killian's daughter, terrified by her boldness and making bashful signals from the shore. She was a plain, honest lass, healthy and happy and good, and with that sort of beauty that comes of happiness and health. But her confusion lent her for the moment an additional charm.

"Good-morning," said Otto, rising and moving towards her. "I arose early and was in a dream."

"O, sir!" she cried, "I wish to beg of you to spare my father; for I assure your Highness, if he had known who you was, he would have bitten his tongue out sooner. And Fritz, too —how he went on! But I had a notion; and this morning I went straight down into the stable, and there was your Highness's crown upon the stirrup-irons! But, oh, sir, I made certain you would spare them; for they were as innocent as lambs."

"My dear," said Otto, both amused and gratified, "you do not understand. It is I who am in the wrong; for I had no business to conceal my name and lead on these gentlemen to speak of me. And it is I who have to beg of you, that you will keep my secret and not betray the discourtesy of which I was guilty. As for any fear of me, your friends are safe in Gerol-

stein; and even in my own territory, you must be well aware I have no power."

"Oh, sir," she said, curtsying, "I would not say that: the huntsmen would all die for you."

"Happy Prince!" said Otto. "But although you are too courteous to avow the knowledge, you have had many opportunities of learning that I am a vain show. Only last night we heard it very clearly stated. You see the shadow flitting on this hard rock. Prince Otto, I am afraid, is but the moving shadow, and the name of the rock is Gondremark. Ah! if your friends had fallen foul of Gondremark! But happily the younger of the two admires him. And as for the old gentleman your father, he is a wise man and an excellent talker, and I would take a long wager he is honest."

"Oh, for honest, your Highness, that he is!" exclaimed the girl. "And Fritz is as honest as he. And as for all they said, it was just talk and nonsense. When countryfolk get gossiping, they go on, I do assure you, for the fun; they don't as much as think of what they say. If you went to the next farm, it's my belief you would hear as much against my father."

"Nay, nay," said Otto, "there you go too fast. For all that was said against Prince Otto——"

"Oh, it was shameful!" cried the girl.

"Not shameful—true," returned Otto. "Oh, yes—true. I am all they said of me—all that and worse."

"I never!" cried Ottilia. "Is that how you do? Well, you would never be a soldier. Now if any one accuses me, I get up and give it them. O, I defend myself. I wouldn't take a fault at another person's hands, no, not if I had it on my forehead. And that's what you must do, if you mean to live it out. But, indeed, I never heard such nonsense. I should think you was ashamed of yourself! You're bald then, I suppose?"

"O, no," said Otto, fairly laughing. "There I acquit myself: not bald!"

"Well, and good?" pursued the girl. "Come now, you know you are good, and I'll make you say so. . . . Your Highness, I beg your humble pardon. But there's no disrespect intended. And anyhow, you know you are."

"Why, now, what am I to say?" replied Otto. "You are a cook, and excellently well you do it; I embrace the chance of thanking you for the ragout. Well now, have you not seen good food so bedevilled by unskilful cookery that no one could be brought to eat the pudding? That is me, my dear. I am full of good ingredients, but the dish is worthless. I am—I give it you in one word—sugar in the salad."

"Well, I don't care, you're good," reiterated Ottilia, a little flushed by having failed to understand.

"I will tell you one thing," replied Otto: "You are!"

"Ah, well, that's what they all said of you," moralised the girl: "such a tongue to come round—such a flattering tongue!"

"O, you forget, I am a man of middle age," the Prince chuckled.

"Well, to speak to you, I should think you was a boy; and Prince or no Prince, if you came worrying where I was cooking, I would pin a napkin to your tails. . . . And, O Lord, I declare I hope your Highness will forgive me," the girl added. "I can't keep it in my mind."

"No more can I," cried Otto. "That is just what they complain of!"

They made a loverly-looking couple; only the heavy pouring of that horse-tail of water made them raise their voices above lovers' pitch. But to a jealous onlooker from above, their mirth and close proximity might easily give umbrage; and a rough voice out of a tuft of brambles began calling on Ottilia by name. She changed colour at that. "It is Fritz," she said. "I must go."

"Go, my dear, and I need not bid you go in peace, for I think you have discovered that I am not formidable at close quarters," said the Prince, and made her a fine gesture of dismissal.

So Ottilia skipped up the bank, and disappeared into the thicket, stopping once for a single blushing bob—blushing, because she had in the interval once more forgotten and remembered the stranger's quality.

Otto returned to his rock promontory; but his humour had in the meantime changed. The sun now shone more fairly on the pool; and over its brown, welling surface, the blue of heaven and the golden green of the spring foliage danced in fleeting arabesque. The eddies laughed and brightened with essential colour. And the beauty of the dell began to rankle in the Prince's mind; it was so near to his own borders, yet without. He had never had much of the joy of possessorship in any of the thousand and one beautiful and curious things that were his; and now he was conscious of envy for what was another's. It was, indeed, a smiling, dilettante sort of envy; but yet there it was: the passion of Ahab for the vineyard, done in little; and he was relieved when Mr. Killian appeared upon the scene.

"I hope, sir, that you have slept well under my plain roof," said the old farmer.

"I am admiring this sweet spot that you are privileged to dwell in," replied Otto, evading the inquiry.

"It is rustic," returned Mr. Gottesheim, looking around him with complacency, "a very rustic corner; and some of the land to the west is most excellent fat land, excellent deep soil. You should see my wheat in the ten-acre field. There is not a farm in Grünewald, no, nor many in Gerolstein, to match the River Farm. Some sixty—I keep thinking when I sow—some sixty,

and some seventy, and some an hundredfold; and my own place, six score! But that, sir, is partly the farming."

"And the stream has fish?" asked Otto.

"A fish-pond," said the farmer. "Ay, it is a pleasant bit. It is pleasant even here, if one had time, with the brook drumming in that black pool, and the green things hanging all about the rocks, and, dear heart, to see the very pebbles! all turned to gold and precious stones! But you have come to that time of life, sir, when, if you will excuse me, you must look to have the rheumatism set in. Thirty to forty is, as one may say, their seed-time. And this is a damp cold corner for the early morning and an empty stomach. If I might humbly advise you, sir, I would be moving."

"With all my heart," said Otto, gravely. "And so you have lived your life here?" he added, as they turned to go.

"Here I was born," replied the farmer, "and here I wish I could say I was to die. But fortune, sir, fortune turns the wheel. They say she is blind, but we will hope she only sees a little farther on. My grandfather and my father and I, we have all tilled these acres, my furrow following theirs. All the three names are on the garden bench, two Killians and one Johann. Yes, sir, good men have prepared themselves for the great change in my old garden. Well do I mind my father, in a woolen

night-cap, the good soul, going round and round to see the last of it. 'Killian,' said he, 'do you see the smoke of my tobacco? Why,' said he, 'that is man's life.' It was his last pipe, and I believe he knew it; and it was a strange thing, without doubt, to leave the trees that he had planted, and the son that he had begotten, ay, sir, and even the old pipe with the Turk's head that he had smoked since he was a lad and went a-courting. But here we have no continuing city; and as for the eternal, it's a comfortable thought that we have other merits than our own. And yet you would hardly think how sore it goes against the grain with me, to die in a strange bed."

"And must you do so? For what reason?" Otto asked.

"The reason? The place is to be sold; three thousand crowns," replied Mr. Gottesheim. "Had it been a third of that, I may say without boasting that, what with my credit and my savings, I could have met the sum. But at three thousand, unless I have singular good fortune and the new proprietor continues me in office, there is nothing left me but to budge."

Otto's fancy for the place redoubled at the news, and became joined with other feelings. If all he heard were true, Grünewald was growing very hot for a sovereign Prince; it might be well to have a refuge; and if so, what more delight-

ful hermitage could man imagine? Mr. Gottesheim, besides, had touched his sympathies. Every man loves in his soul to play the part of the stage deity. And to step down to the aid of the old farmer, who had so roughly handled him in talk, was the ideal of a Fair Revenge. Otto's thoughts brightened at the prospect, and he began to regard himself with a renewed respect.

"I can find you, I believe, a purchaser," he said, "and one who would continue to avail himself of your skill."

"Can you, sir, indeed?" said the old man. "Well, I shall be heartily obliged; for I begin to find a man may practise resignation all his days, as he takes physic, and not come to like it in the end."

"If you will have the papers drawn, you may even burthen the purchase with your interest," said Otto. "Let it be assured to you through life."

"Your friend, sir," insinuated Killian, "would not, perhaps, care to make the interest reversible? Fritz is a good lad."

"Fritz is young," said the Prince, drily; "he must earn consideration, not inherit."

"He has long worked upon the place, sir," insisted Mr. Gottesheim; "and at my great age, for I am seventy-eight come harvest, it would be a troublesome thought to the proprietor how to fill my shoes. It would be a care

spared to assure yourself of Fritz. And I believe he might be tempted by a permanency."

"The young man has unsettled views," returned Otto.

"Possibly the purchaser——" began Killian.

A little spot of anger burned in Otto's cheek. "I am the purchaser," he said.

"It was what I might have guessed," replied the farmer, bowing with an aged, obsequious dignity. "You have made an old man very happy; and I may say, indeed, that I have entertained an angel unawares. Sir, the great people of this world—and by that I mean those who are great in station—if they had only hearts like yours, how they would make the fires burn and the poor sing!"

"I would not judge them hardly, sir," said Otto. "We all have our frailties."

"Truly, sir," said Mr. Gottesheim, with unction. "And by what name, sir, am I to address my generous landlord?"

The double recollection of an English traveller whom he had received the week before at court, and of an old English rogue called Transome whom he had known in youth, came pertinently to the Prince's help. "Transome," he answered, "is my name. I am an English traveller. It is, to-day, Tuesday. On Thursday, before noon, the money shall be ready. Let us meet, if you please, in Mittwalden, at the 'Morning Star'."

"I am, in all things lawful, your servant to

command," replied the farmer. "An Englishman! You are a great race of travellers. And has your lordship some experience of land?"

"I have had some interest of the kind before," returned the Prince; "not in Gerolstein, indeed. But fortune, as you say, turns the wheel, and I desire to be beforehand with her revolutions."

"Very right, sir, I am sure," said Mr. Killian.

They had been strolling with deliberation; but they were now drawing near to the farmhouse, mounting by the trellised pathway to the level of the meadow. A little before them, the sound of voices had been some while audible, and now grew louder and more distinct with every step of their advance. Presently, when they emerged upon the top of the bank, they beheld Fritz and Ottilia some way off; he, very black and bloodshot, emphasising his hoarse speech with the smacking of his fist against his palm; she, standing a little way off in blowsy, voluble distress.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Gottesheim, and made as if he would turn aside.

But Otto went straight towards the lovers, in whose dissension he believed himself to have a share. And, indeed, as soon as he had seen the Prince, Fritz had stood tragic, as if awaiting and defying his approach.

"O, here you are!" he cried, as soon as they were near enough for easy speech. "You are a man at least, and must reply. What were

you after? Why were you two skulking in the bush? God!" he broke out, turning again upon Ottilia, "to think that I should waste my heart on you!"

"I beg your pardon," Otto cut in. "You were addressing me. In virtue of what circumstance am I to render you an account of this young lady's conduct? Are you her father? her brother? her husband?"

"O, sir, you know as well as I," returned the peasant. "We keep company, she and I. I love her, and she is by way of loving me; but all shall be above-board, I would have her to know. I have a good pride of my own."

"Why, I perceive I must explain to you what love is," said Otto. "Its measure is kindness. It is very possible that you are proud; but she, too, may have some self-esteem; I do not speak for myself. And perhaps, if your own doings were so curiously examined, you might find it inconvenient to reply."

"These are all set-offs," said the young man. "You know very well that a man is a man, and a woman only a woman. That holds good all over, up and down. I ask you a question, I ask it again, and here I stand." He drew a mark and toed it.

"When you have studied liberal doctrines somewhat deeper," said the Prince, "you will perhaps change your note. You are a man of false weights and measures, my young friend.

You have one scale for women, another for men; one for princes, and one for farmer-folk. On the prince who neglects his wife you can be most severe. But what of the lover who insults his mistress? You use the name of love. I should think this lady might very fairly ask to be delivered from love of such a nature. For if I, a stranger, had been one-tenth part so gross and so discourteous, you would most righteously have broke my head. It would have been in your part, as lover, to protect her from such insolence. Protect her first, then, from yourself."

"Ay," quoth Mr. Gottesheim, who had been looking on with his hands behind his tall old back, "ay, that's Scripture truth."

Fritz was staggered, not only by the Prince's imperturbable superiority of manner, but by a glimmering consciousness that he himself was in the wrong. The appeal to liberal doctrines had, besides, unmanned him.

"Well," said he, "if I was rude, I'll own to it. I meant no ill, and did nothing out of my just rights; but I am above all these old vulgar notions too; and if I spoke sharp, I'll ask her pardon."

"Freely granted, Fritz," said Ottilia.

"But all this doesn't answer me," cried Fritz. "I ask what you two spoke about. She says she promised not to tell; well, then, I mean to know. Civility is civility; but I'll

be no man's gull. I have a right to common justice, if I *do* keep company!"

"If you will ask Mr. Gottesheim," replied Otto, "you will find I have not spent my hours in idleness. I have, since I arose this morning, agreed to buy the farm. So far I will go to satisfy a curiosity which I condemn."

"O, well, if there was business, that's another matter," returned Fritz. "Though it beats me why you could not tell. But, of course, if the gentleman is to buy the farm, I suppose there would naturally be an end."

"To be sure," said Mr. Gottesheim, with a strong accent of conviction.

But Ottilia was much braver. "There now!" she cried in triumph. "What did I tell you? I told you I was fighting your battles. Now you see! Think shame of your suspicious temper! You should go down upon your bended knees both to that gentleman and me."

CHAPTER IV

IN WHICH THE PRINCE COLLECTS OPINIONS BY THE WAY

A LITTLE before noon Otto, by a triumph of manœuvring, effected his escape. He was quit in this way of the ponderous gratitude of Mr. Killian, and of the confidential gratitude of poor Ottilia; but of Fritz he was not quit so readily. That young politician, brimming with mysterious glances, offered to lend his convoy as far as to the high-road; and Otto, in fear of some residuary jealousy and for the girl's sake, had not the courage to gainsay him; but he regarded his companion with uneasy glances, and devoutly wished the business at an end. For some time Fritz walked by the mare in silence; and they had already traversed more than half the proposed distance when, with something of a blush, he looked up and opened fire.

"Are you not," he asked, "what they call a socialist?"

"Why, no," returned Otto, "not precisely what they call so. Why do you ask?"

"I will tell you why," said the young man. "I saw from the first that you were a red progressional, and nothing but the fear of old Killian kept you back. And there, sir, you were right: old men are always cowards. But nowadays, you see, there are so many groups: you can never tell how far the likeliest kind of man may be prepared to go; and I was never sure you were one of the strong thinkers, till you hinted about women and free love."

"Indeed," cried Otto, "I never said a word of such a thing."

"Not you!" cried Fritz. "Never a word to compromise! You was sowing seed: ground-bait, our president calls it. But it's hard to deceive me, for I know all the agitators and their ways, and all the doctrines; and between you and me," lowering his voice, "I am myself affiliated. O, yes, I am a secret society man, and here is my medal." And drawing out a green ribbon that he wore about his neck he held up, for Otto's inspection, a pewter medal bearing the imprint of a Phœnix and the legend, *Libertas*. "And so now you see you may trust me," added Fritz. "I am none of your ale-house talkers; I am a convinced revolutionary." And he looked meltingly upon Otto.

"I see," replied the Prince; "that is very gratifying. Well, sir, the great thing for the good of one's country is, first of all, to be a good man. All springs from there. For my part,

although you are right in thinking that I have to do with politics, I am unfit by intellect and temper for a leading *rôle*. I was intended, I fear, for a subaltern. Yet we have all something to command, Mr. Fritz, if it be only our own temper; and a man about to marry must look closely to himself. The husband's, like the prince's, is a very artificial standing; and it is hard to be kind in either. Do you follow that?"

"O, yes, I follow that," replied the young man, sadly chop-fallen over the nature of the information he had elicited; and then brightening up: "Is it," he ventured, "is it for an arsenal that you have bought the farm?"

"We'll see about that," the Prince answered, laughing. "You must not be too zealous. And in the meantime, if I were you, I would say nothing on the subject."

"O, trust me, sir, for that," cried Fritz, as he pocketed a crown. "And you've let nothing out; for I suspected—I might say I knew it—from the first. And mind you, when a guide is required," he added, "I know all the forest paths."

Otto rode away, chuckling. This talk with Fritz had vastly entertained him; nor was he altogether discontented with his bearing at the farm; men, he was able to tell himself, had behaved worse under smaller provocation. And, to harmonise all, the road and the April air were both delightful to his soul.

Up and down, and to and fro, ever mounting through the wooded foothills, the broad, white high-road wound onward into Grünewald. On either hand the pines stood coolly rooted—green moss prospering, springs welling forth between their knuckled spurs; and though some were broad and stalwart, and others spiry and slender, yet all stood firm in the same attitude and with the same expression, like a silent army presenting arms.

The road lay all the way apart from towns and villages, which it left on either hand. Here and there, indeed, in the bottom of green glens, the Prince could spy a few congregated roofs, or perhaps above him, on a shoulder, the solitary cabin of a woodman. But the highway was an international undertaking, and with its face set for distant cities, scorned the little life of Grünewald. Hence it was exceedingly solitary. Near the frontier Otto met a detachment of his own troops marching in the hot dust; and he was recognised and somewhat feebly cheered as he rode by. But from that time forth and for a long while he was alone with the great woods.

Gradually the spell of pleasure relaxed; his own thoughts returned, like stinging insects, in a cloud; and the talk of the night before, like a shower of buffets, fell upon his memory. He looked east and west for any comforter; and presently he was aware of a cross-road

coming steeply down hill, and a horseman cautiously descending. A human voice or presence, like a spring in the desert, was now welcome in itself, and Otto drew bridle to await the coming of this stranger. He proved to be a very red-faced, thick-lipped countryman, with a pair of fat saddle-bags and a stone bottle at his waist; who, as soon as the Prince hailed him, jovially, if somewhat thickly, answered. At the same time he gave a beery yaw in the saddle. It was clear his bottle was no longer full.

"Do you ride towards Mittwalden?" asked the Prince.

"As far as the cross-road to Tannenbrunn," the man replied. "Will you bear company?"

"With pleasure. I have even waited for you on the chance," answered Otto.

By this time they were close alongside; and the man, with the countryfolk instinct, turned his cloudy vision first of all on his companion's mount. "The devil!" he cried, "you ride a bonny mare, friend!" And then, his curiosity being satisfied about the essential, he turned his attention to that merely secondary matter, his companion's face. He started. "The Prince!" he cried, saluting, with another yaw that came near dismounting him. "I beg your pardon, your Highness, not to have recognised you at once."

The Prince was vexed out of his self-possession.

"Since you know me," he said, "it is unnecessary we should ride together. I will precede you, if you please." And he was about to set spur to the grey mare, when the half-drunken fellow, reaching over, laid his hand upon the rein.

"Hark you," he said, "prince or no prince, that is not how one man should conduct himself with another. What! You'll ride with me incog. and set me talking! But if I know you, you'll preshede me, if you please! Spy!" And the fellow, crimson with drink and injured vanity, almost spat the word into the Prince's face.

A horrid confusion came over Otto. He perceived that he had acted rudely, grossly presuming on his station. And perhaps a little shiver of physical alarm mingled with his remorse, for the fellow was very powerful and not more than half in the possession of his senses. "Take your hand from my rein," he said, with a sufficient assumption of command; and when the man, rather to his wonder, had obeyed: "You should understand, sir," he added, "that while I might be glad to ride with you as one person of sagacity with another, and so receive your true opinions, it would amuse me very little to hear the empty compliments you would address to me as Prince."

"You think I would lie, do you?" cried the man with the bottle, purpling deeper.

"I know you would," returned Otto, entering

entirely into his self-possession. "You would not even show me the medal you wear about your neck." For he had caught a glimpse of a green ribbon at the fellow's throat.

The change was instantaneous: the red face became mottled with yellow; a thick-fingered, tottering hand made a clutch at the tell-tale ribbon. "Medal!" the man cried, wonderfully sobered. "I have no medal."

"Pardon me," said the Prince. "I will even tell you what that medal bears: a Phœnix burning, with the word *Libertas*." The medallist remaining speechless, "You are a pretty fellow," continued Otto, smiling, "to complain of incivility from the man whom you conspire to murder."

"Murder!" protested the man. "Nay, never that; nothing criminal for me!"

"You are strangely misinformed," said Otto. "Conspiracy itself is criminal, and insures the pain of death. Nay, sir, death it is; I will guarantee my accuracy. Not that you need be so deplorably affected, for I am no officer. But those who mingle with politics should look at both sides of the medal."

"Your Highness . . ." began the knight of the bottle.

"Nonsense! you are a Republican," cried Otto; "what have you to do with highnesses? But let us continue to ride forward. Since you so much desire it, I cannot find it in my heart

to deprive you of my company. And for that matter, I have a question to address to you. Why, being so great a body of men—for you are a great body—fifteen thousand, I have heard, but that will be understated; am I right?"

The man gurgled in his throat.

"Why, then, being so considerable a party," resumed Otto, "do you not come before me boldly with your wants?—what do I say? with your commands? Have I the name of being passionately devoted to my throne? I can scarce suppose it. Come, then; show me your majority, and I will instantly resign. Tell this to your friends; assure them from me of my docility; assure them that, however they conceived of my deficiencies, they cannot suppose me more unfit to be a ruler than I do myself. I am one of the worst princes in Europe; will they improve on that?"

"Far be it from me . . ." the man began.

"See, now, if you will not defend my government!" cried Otto. "If I were you, I would leave conspiracies. You are as little fit to be a conspirator as I to be a king."

"One thing I will say out," said the man. "It is not so much you that we complain of, it's your lady."

"Not a word, sir," said the Prince; and then after a moment's pause, and in tones of some anger and contempt: "I once more advise you to have done with politics," he added; "and

when next I see you, let me see you sober. A morning drunkard is the last man to sit in judgment even upon the worst of princes."

"I have had a drop, but I had not been drinking," the man replied, triumphing in a sound distinction. "And if I had, what then? Nobody hangs by me. But my mill is standing idle, and I blame it on your wife. Am I alone in that? Go round and ask. Where are the mills? Where are the young men that should be working? Where is the currency? All paralysed. No, sir, it is not equal; for I suffer for your faults—I pay for them, by George, out of a poor man's pocket. And what have you to do with mine? Drunk or sober, I can see my country going to hell, and I can see whose fault it is. And so now, I've said my say, and you may drag me to a stinking dungeon; what care I? I've spoke the truth, and so I'll hold hard, and not intrude upon your Highness's society."

And the miller reined up and, clumsily enough, saluted.

"You will observe, I have not asked your name?" said Otto. "I wish you a good ride," and he rode on hard. But let him ride as he pleased, this interview with the miller was a chokepear, which he could not swallow. He had begun by receiving a reproof in manners and ended by sustaining a defeat in logic, both from a man whom he despised. All his old thoughts returned with fresher venom. And

by three in the afternoon, coming to the cross-roads for Beckstein, Otto decided to turn aside and dine there leisurely. Nothing at least could be worse than to go on as he was going.

In the inn at Beckstein he remarked, immediately upon his entrance, an intelligent young gentleman dining, with a book in front of him. He had his own place laid close to the reader, and with a proper apology, broke ground by asking what he read.

"I am perusing," answered the young gentleman, "the last work of the Herr Doctor Hohenstockwitz, cousin and librarian of your Prince here in Grünewald—a man of great erudition and some lambencies of wit."

"I am acquainted," said Otto, "with the Herr Doctor, though not yet with his work."

"Two privileges that I must envy you," replied the young man, politely: "an honour in hand, a pleasure in the bush."

"The Herr Doctor is a man much respected, I believe, for his attainments?" asked the Prince.

"He is, sir, a remarkable instance of the force of intellect," replied the reader. "Who of our young men know anything of his cousin, all reigning Prince although he be? Who but has heard of Doctor Gotthold? But intellectual merit, alone of all distinctions, has its base in nature."

"I have the gratification of addressing a student—perhaps an author?" Otto suggested.

The young man somewhat flushed. "I have some claim to both distinctions, sir, as you suppose," said he; "there is my card. I am the licentiate Roederer, author of several works on the theory and practice of politics."

"You immensely interest me," said the Prince; "the more so as I gather that here in Grünewald we are on the brink of revolution. Pray, since these have been your special studies, would you augur hopefully of such a movement?"

"I perceive," said the young author, with a certain vinegary twitch, "that you are unacquainted with my opuscula. I am a convinced authoritarian. I share none of those illusory, Utopian fancies with which empirics blind themselves and exasperate the ignorant. The day of these ideas is, believe me, past, or at least passing."

"When I look about me ——" began Otto.

"When you look about you," interrupted the licentiate, "you behold the ignorant. But in the laboratory of opinion, beside the studious lamp, we begin already to discard these figments. We begin to return to nature's order, to what I might call, if I were to borrow from the language of therapeutics, the expectant treatment of abuses. You will not misunderstand me," he continued: "a country in the condition in which we find Grünewald, a prince such as your Prince Otto, we must explicitly condemn; they are behind the age. But I would look for a remedy

not to brute convulsions, but to the natural supervenience of a more able sovereign. I should amuse you, perhaps," added the licentiate, with a smile, "I think I should amuse you if I were to explain my notion of a prince. We who have studied in the closet, no longer, in this age, propose ourselves for active service. The paths, we have perceived, are incompatible. I would not have a student on the throne, though I would have one near by for an adviser. I would set forward as prince a man of a good, medium understanding, lively rather than deep; a man of courtly manner, possessed of the double art to ingratiate and to command; receptive, accommodating, seductive. I have been observing you since your first entrance. Well, sir, were I a subject of Grünewald I should pray heaven to set upon the seat of government just such another as yourself."

"The devil, you would!" exclaimed the Prince.

The licentiate Roederer laughed most heartily. "I thought I should astonish you," he said. "These are not the ideas of the masses."

"They are not, I can assure you," Otto said.

"Or rather," distinguished the licentiate, "not to-day. The time will come, however, when these ideas shall prevail."

"You will permit me, sir, to doubt it," said Otto.

"Modesty is always admirable," chuckled

the theorist. "But yet I assure you, a man like you, with such a man as, say, Doctor Gotthold at your elbow, would be, for all practical issues, my ideal ruler."

At this rate the hours sped pleasantly for Otto. But the licentiate unfortunately slept that night at Beckstein, where he was, being dainty in the saddle and given to half stages. And to find a convoy to Mittwalden, and thus mitigate the company of his own thoughts, the Prince had to make favour with a certain party of wood merchants from various states of the empire, who had been drinking together somewhat noisily at the far end of the apartment.

The night had already fallen when they took the saddle. The merchants were very loud and mirthful; each had a face like a nor'west moon; and they played pranks with each other's horses, and mingled songs and choruses, and alternately remembered and forgot the companion of their ride. Otto thus combined society and solitude, hearkening now to their chattering and empty talk, now to the voices of the encircling forest. The starlit dark, the faint wood airs, the clank of the horseshoes making broken music, accorded together and attuned his mind. And he was still in a most equal temper when the party reached the top of that long hill that overlooks Mittwalden.

Down in the bottom of a bowl of forest, the lights of the little formal town glittered in a

pattern, street crossing street; away by itself on the right, the palace was glowing like a factory.

Although he knew not Otto, one of the wood merchants was a native of the state. "There," said he, pointing to the palace with his whip, "there is Jezebel's inn."

"What, do you call it that?" cried another laughing.

"Ay, that's what they call it," returned the Grünewalder; and he broke into a song, which the rest, as people well acquainted with the words and air, instantly took up in chorus. Her Serene Highness Amalia Seraphina, Princess of Grünewald, was the heroine, Gondremark the hero of this ballad. Shame hissed in Otto's ears. He reined up short and sat stunned in the saddle; and the singers continued to descend the hill without him.

The song went to a rough, swashing, popular air; and long after the words became inaudible the swing of the music, rising and falling, echoed insult in the Prince's brain. He fled the sounds. Hard by him on his right a road struck towards the palace, and he followed it through the thick shadows and branching alleys of the park. It was a busy place on a fine summer's afternoon, when the court and burghers met and saluted; but at that hour of the night in the early spring it was deserted to the roosting birds. Hares rustled among the covert; here and there a

statue stood glimmering, with its eternal gesture; here and there the echo of an imitation temple clattered ghostly to the trampling of the mare. Ten minutes brought him to the upper end of his own home garden, where the small stables opened, over a bridge, upon the park. The yard clock was striking the hour of ten; so was the big bell in the palace bell-tower; and, farther off, the belfries of the town. About the stable all else was silent but the stamping of stalled horses and the rattle of halters. Otto dismounted; and as he did so a memory came back to him: a whisper of dishonest grooms and stolen corn, once heard, long forgotten, and now recurring in the nick of opportunity. He crossed the bridge, and, going up to a window, knocked six or seven heavy blows in a particular cadence, and, as he did so, smiled. Presently a wicket was opened in the gate, and a man's head appeared in the dim starlight.

"Nothing to-night," said a voice.

"Bring a lantern," said the Prince.

"Dear heart a' mercy!" cried the groom. "Who's that?"

"It is I, the Prince," replied Otto. "Bring a lantern, take in the mare, and let me through into the garden."

The man remained silent for a while, his head still projecting through the wicket.

"His Highness!" he said at last. "And why did your Highness knock so strange?"

"It is a superstition in Mittwalden," answered Otto, "that it cheapens corn."

With a sound like a sob the groom fled. He was very white when he returned, even by the light of the lantern; and his hand trembled as he undid the fastenings and took the mare.

"Your Highness," he began at last, "for God's sake . . ." And there he paused, oppressed with guilt.

"For God's sake, what?" asked Otto, cheerfully. "For God's sake, let us have cheaper corn, say I. Good-night!" And he strode off into the garden, leaving the groom petrified once more.

The garden descended by a succession of stone terraces to the level of the fish-pond. On the far side the ground rose again, and was crowned by the confused roofs and gables of the palace. The modern pillared front, the ball-room, the great library, the princely apartments, the busy and illuminated quarters of the great house, all faced the town. The garden side was much older; and here it was almost dark; only a few windows quietly lighted at various elevations. The great square tower rose, thinning by stages like a telescope; and on the top of all the flag hung motionless.

The garden, as it now lay in the dusk and glimmer of the starshine, breathed of April violets. Under night's cavern arch the shrubs

obscurely bustled. Through the plotted terraces and down the marble stairs the Prince rapidly descended, fleeing before uncomfortable thoughts. But, alas! from these there is no city of refuge. And now, when he was about midway of the descent, distant strains of music began to fall upon his ear from the ball-room, where the court was dancing. They reached him faint and broken, but they touched the keys of memory; and through and above them, Otto heard the ranting melody of the wood merchants' song. Mere blackness seized upon his mind. Here he was, coming home; the wife was dancing, the husband had been playing a trick upon a lackey; and meanwhile, all about them, they were a by-word to their subjects. Such a prince, such a husband, such a man, as this Otto had become! And he sped the faster onward.

Some way below he came unexpectedly upon a sentry; yet a little farther, and he was challenged by a second; and as he crossed the bridge over the fish-pond, an officer making the rounds stopped him once more. The parade of watch was more than usual; but curiosity was dead in Otto's mind, and he only chafed at the interruption. The porter of the back postern admitted him, and started to behold him so disordered. Thence, hasting by private stairs and passages, he came at length unseen to his own chamber, tore off his clothes, and threw

himself upon his bed in the dark. The music of the ball-room still continued to a very lively measure; and still, behind that, he heard in spirit the chorus of the merchants clanking down the hill.

BOOK II

OF LOVE AND POLITICS

CHAPTER I

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE LIBRARY

AT a quarter before six on the following morning Doctor Gotthold was already at his desk in the library; and with a small cup of black coffee at his elbow, and an eye occasionally wandering to the busts and the long array of many-coloured books, was quietly reviewing the labours of the day before. He was a man of about forty, flaxen-haired, with refined features a little worn, and bright eyes somewhat faded. Early to bed and early to rise, his life was devoted to two things: erudition and Rhine wine. An ancient friendship existed latent between him and Otto; they rarely met, but when they did it was to take up at once the thread of their suspended intimacy. Gotthold, the virgin priest of knowledge, had envied his cousin, for half a day, when he was married; he had never envied him his throne.

Reading was not a popular diversion at the court of Grünewald; and that great, pleasant, sunshiny gallery of books and statues was, in practice, Gotthold's private cabinet. On this

particular Wednesday morning, however, he had not been long about his manuscript when a door opened and the Prince stepped into the apartment. The doctor watched him as he drew near, receiving, from each of the embayed windows in succession, a flush of morning sun; and Otto looked so gay, and walked so airily, he was so well dressed and brushed and frizzled, so point-device, and of such a sovereign elegance, that the heart of his cousin the recluse was rather moved against him.

"Good-morning, Gotthold," said Otto, dropping in a chair.

"Good-morning, Otto," returned the librarian. "You are an early bird. Is this an accident, or do you begin reforming?"

"It is about time, I fancy," answered the Prince.

"I cannot imagine," said the Doctor. "I am too sceptical to be an ethical adviser; and as for good resolutions, I believed in them when I was young. They are the colours of hope's rainbow."

"If you come to think of it," said Otto, "I am not a popular sovereign." And with a look he changed his statement to a question.

"Popular? Well, there I would distinguish," answered Gotthold, leaning back and joining the tips of his fingers. "There are various kinds of popularity; the bookish, which is perfectly impersonal, as unreal as the nightmare; the

politician's, a mixed variety; and yours, which is the most personal of all. Women take to you; footmen adore you; it is as natural to like you as to pat a dog; and were you a saw-miller you would be the most popular citizen in Grünewald. As a prince—well, you are in the wrong trade. It is perhaps philosophical to recognise it as you do."

"Perhaps philosophical?" repeated Otto.

"Yes, perhaps. I would not be dogmatic," answered Gotthold.

"Perhaps philosophical, and certainly not virtuous," Otto resumed.

"Not of a Roman virtue," chuckled the recluse.

Otto drew his chair nearer to the table, leaned upon it with his elbow, and looked his cousin squarely in the face. "In short," he asked, "not manly?"

"Well," Gotthold hesitated, "not manly, if you will." And then with a laugh, "I did not know that you gave yourself out to be manly," he added. "It was one of the points that I inclined to like about you; inclined, I believe, to admire. The names of virtues exercise a charm on most of us; we must lay claim to all of them, however incompatible; we must all be both daring and prudent; we must all vaunt our pride and go to the stake for our humility. Not so you. Without compromise you were yourself: a pretty sight. I have always said it: none so void of all pretence as Otto."

"Pretence and effort both!" cried Otto. "A dead dog in a canal is more alive. And the question, Gotthold, the question that I have to face is this: Can I not, with effort and self-denial, can I not become a tolerable sovereign?"

"Never," replied Gotthold. "Dismiss the notion. And besides, dear child, you would not try."

"Nay, Gotthold, I am not to be put by," said Otto. "If I am constitutionally unfit to be a sovereign, what am I doing with this money, with this palace, with these guards? And I—a thief—am to execute the law on others?"

"I admit the difficulty," said Gotthold.

"Well, can I not try?" continued Otto. "Am I not bound to try? And with the advice and help of such a man as you ——"

"Me!" cried the librarian. "Now, God forbid!"

Otto, though he was in no very smiling humour, could not forbear to smile. "Yet I was told last night," he laughed, "that with a man like me to impersonate, and a man like you to touch the springs, a very possible government could be composed."

"Now I wonder in what diseased imagination," Gotthold said, "that preposterous monster saw the light of day?"

"It was one of your own trade—a writer, one Roederer," said Otto.

"Roederer! an ignorant puppy!" cried the librarian.

"You are ungrateful," said Otto. "He is one of your professed admirers."

"Is he?" cried Gotthold, obviously impressed. "Come, that is a good account of the young man. I must read his stuff again. It is the rather to his credit, as our views are opposite. The east and west are not more opposite. Can I have converted him? But no; the incident belongs to Fairyland."

"You are not then," asked the Prince, "an authoritarian?"

"I? God bless me, no!" said Gotthold. "I am a red, dear child."

"That brings me then to my next point, and by a natural transition. If I am so clearly unfitted for my post," the Prince asked; "if my friends admit it, if my subjects clamour for my downfall, if revolution is preparing at this hour, must I not go forth to meet the inevitable? should I not save these horrors and be done with these absurdities? in a word, should I not abdicate? O, believe me, I feel the ridicule, the vast abuse of language," he added, wincing, "but even a principulus like me cannot resign; he must make a great gesture, and come buskined forth, and abdicate."

"Ay," said Gotthold, "or else stay where he is. What gnat has bitten you to-day? Do you not know that you are touching, with lay

hands, the very holiest inwards of philosophy, where madness dwells? Ay, Otto, madness; for in the serene temples of the wise, the inmost shrine, which we carefully keep locked, is full of spiders' webs. All men, all, are fundamentally useless; nature tolerates, she does not need, she does not use them: sterile flowers! All—down to the fellow swinking in a byre, whom fools point out for the exception—all are useless; all weave ropes of sand; or like a child that has breathed on a window, write and obliterate, write and obliterate, idle words! Talk of it no more. That way, I tell you, madness lies." The speaker rose from his chair and then sat down again. He laughed a little laugh, and then, changing his tone, resumed: "Yes, dear child, we are not here to do battle with giants; we are here to be happy like the flowers, if we can be. It is because you could, that I have already secretly admired you. Cling to that trade; believe me, it is the right one. Be happy, be idle, be airy. To the devil with all casuistry! and leave the state to Gondremark, as heretofore. He does it well enough, they say; and his vanity enjoys the situation."

"Gotthold," cried Otto, "what is this to me? Useless is not the question; I cannot rest at uselessness; I must be useful or I must be noxious—one or other. I grant you the whole thing, prince and principality alike, is pure absurdity, a stroke of satire; and that a banker or the man

who keeps an inn has graver duties. But now, when I have washed my hands of it three years, and left all—labour, responsibility, and honour and enjoyment too, if there be any—to Gondremark and to—Seraphina——" He hesitated at the name, and Gotthold glanced aside. "Well," the Prince continued, "what has come of it? Taxes, army, cannon—why, it's like a box of lead soldiers! And the people sick at the folly of it, and fired with the injustice! And war, too—I hear of war—war in this teapot! What a complication of absurdity and disgrace! And when the inevitable end arrives—the revolution—who will be to blame in the sight of God, who will be gibbeted in public opinion? I! Prince Puppet!"

"I thought you had despised public opinion," said Gotthold.

"I did," said Otto, sombrely, "but now I do not. I am growing old. And then, Gotthold, there is Seraphina. She is loathed in this country that I brought her to and suffered her to spoil. Yes, I gave it her as a plaything, and she has broken it: a fine Prince, an admirable Princess! Even her life—I ask you, Gotthold, is her life safe?"

"It is safe enough to-day," replied the librarian; "but since you ask me seriously, I would not answer for to-morrow. She is ill-advised."

"And by whom? By this Gondremark, to whom you counsel me to leave my country,"

cried the Prince. "Rare advice! The course that I have been following all these years, to come at last to this. O, ill-advised! if that were all! See now, there is no sense in beating about the bush between two men: you know what scandal says of her?"

Gotthold, with pursed lips, silently nodded.

"Well, come, you are not very cheering as to my conduct as the Prince; have I even done my duty as a husband?" Otto asked.

"Nay, nay," said Gotthold, earnestly and eagerly, "this is another chapter. I am an old celibate, an old monk. I cannot advise you in your marriage."

"Nor do I require advice," said Otto, rising. "All of this must cease." And he began to walk to and fro with his hands behind his back.

"Well, Otto, may God guide you!" said Gotthold, after a considerable silence. "I cannot."

"From what does all this spring?" said the Prince, stopping in his walk. "What am I to call it? Diffidence? The fear of ridicule? Inverted vanity? What matter names, if it has brought me to this? I could never bear to be bustling about nothing; I was ashamed of this toy kingdom from the first; I could not tolerate that people should fancy I believed in a thing so patently absurd! I would do nothing that cannot be done smiling. I have a sense of humour forsooth! I must know better than my maker. And it was the same thing in my

marriage," he added more hoarsely. "I did not believe this girl could care for me; I must not intrude; I must preserve the foppery of my indifference. What an impotent picture!"

"Ay, we have the same blood," moralised Gotthold. "You are drawing, with fine strokes, the character of the born sceptic."

"Sceptic?—coward!" cried Otto. "Coward is the word. A springless, putty-hearted, cowering coward!"

And as the Prince rapped out the words in tones of unusual vigour, a little, stout, old gentleman, opening a door behind Gotthold, received them fairly in the face. With his parrot's beak for a nose, his pursed mouth, his little goggling eyes, he was the picture of formality; and in ordinary circumstances, strutting behind the drum of his corporation, he impressed the beholder with a certain air of frozen dignity and wisdom. But at the smallest contrariety, his trembling hands and disconnected gestures betrayed the weakness at the root. And now, when he was thus surprisingly received in that library of Mittwalden Palace, which was the customary haunt of silence, his hands went up into the air as if he had been shot, and he cried aloud with the scream of an old woman.

"O!" he gasped, recovering. "Your Highness! I beg ten thousand pardons. But your Highness at such an hour in the library!—a circumstance so unusual as your Highness's

presence was a thing I could not be expected to foresee."

"There is no harm done, Herr Cancellarius," said Otto. "I came upon the errand of a moment; some papers I left over night with the Herr Doctor," said the Chancellor of Grünewald. "Herr Doctor, if you will kindly give me them, I will intrude no longer."

Gotthold unlocked a drawer and handed a bundle of manuscript to the old gentleman, who prepared, with fitting salutations, to take his departure.

"Herr Greisengesang, since we have met," said Otto, "let us talk."

"I am honoured by his Highness's commands," replied the Chancellor.

"All has been quiet since I left?" asked the Prince, resuming his seat.

"The usual business, your Highness," answered Greisengesang; "punctual trifles: huge, indeed, if neglected, but trifles when discharged. Your Highness is most zealously obeyed."

"Obeyed, Herr Cancellarius?" returned the Prince. "And when have I obliged you with an order? Replaced, let us rather say. But to touch upon these trifles; instance me a few."

"The routine of government, from which your Highness has so wisely dissociated his leisure . . ." began Greisengesang.

"We will leave my leisure, sir," said Otto. "Approach the facts."

"The routine of business was proceeded with," replied the official, now visibly twittering.

"It is very strange, Herr Cancellarius, that you should so persistently avoid my questions," said the Prince. "You tempt me to suppose a purpose in your dulness. I have asked you whether all was quiet: do me the pleasure to reply."

"Perfectly—O, perfectly quiet," jerked the ancient puppet, with every signal of untruth.

"I make a note of these words," said the Prince, gravely. "You assure me, your sovereign, that since the date of my departure nothing has occurred of which you owe me an account."

"I take your Highness, I take the Herr Doctor to witness," cried Greisengesang, "that I have had no such expression."

"Halt!" said the Prince; and then, after a pause: "Herr Greisengesang, you are an old man, and you served my father before you served me," he added. "It consists neither with your dignity nor mine, that you should babble excuses and stumble possibly upon untruths. Collect your thoughts; and then categorically inform me of all you have been charged to hide."

Gotthold, stooping very low over his desk, appeared to have resumed his labours; but his shoulders heaved with subterranean merriment. The Prince waited, drawing his handkerchief quietly through his fingers.

"Your Highness, in this informal manner," said

the old gentleman at last, "and being unavoidably deprived of documents, it would be difficult, it would be impossible, to do justice to the somewhat grave occurrences which have transpired."

"I will not criticise your attitude," replied the Prince. "I desire that, between you and me, all should be done gently; for I have not forgotten, my old friend, that you were kind to me from the first, and for a period of years a faithful servant. I will thus dismiss the matters on which you waive immediate inquiry. But you have certain papers actually in your hand. Come, Herr Greisengesang, there is at least one point for which you have authority. Enlighten me on that."

"On that?" cried the old gentleman. "O, that is a trifle; a matter, your Highness, of police; a detail of a purely administrative order. These are simply a selection of the papers seized upon the English traveller."

"Seized?" echoed Otto. "In what sense? Explain yourself."

"Sir John Crabtree," interposed Gotthold, looking up, "was arrested yesterday evening."

"Is this so, Herr Cancellarius?" demanded Otto, sternly.

"It was judged right, your Highness," protested Greisengesang. "The decree was in due form, invested with your Highness's authority by procuration. I am but an agent; I had no status to prevent the measure."

"This man, my guest, has been arrested," said the Prince. "On what grounds, sir? With what colour of pretence?"

The Chancellor stammered.

"Your Highness will perhaps find the reason in these documents," said Gotthold, pointing with the tail of his pen.

Otto thanked his cousin with a look. "Give them to me," he said, addressing the Chancellor.

But that gentleman visibly hesitated to obey. "Baron von Gondremark," he said, "has made the affair his own. I am in this case a mere messenger; and as such, I am not clothed with any capacity to communicate the documents I carry. Herr Doctor, I am convinced you will not fail to bear me out."

"I have heard a great deal of nonsense," said Gotthold, "and most of it from you; but this beats all."

"Come, sir," said Otto, rising, "the papers I command."

Herr Greisengesang instantly gave way.

"With your Highness's permission," he said, "and laying at his feet my most submiss apologies, I will now hasten to attend his further orders in the Chancery."

"Herr Cancellarius, do you see this chair?" said Otto. "There is where you shall attend my further orders. O, now, no more!" he cried, with a gesture, as the old man opened his lips. "You have sufficiently marked your zeal to

your employer; and I begin to weary of a moderation you abuse."

The Chancellor moved to the appointed chair and took his seat in silence.

"And now," said Otto, opening the roll, "what is all this? it looks like the manuscript of a book."

"It is," said Gotthold, "the manuscript of a book of travels."

"You have read it, Doctor Hohenstockwitz?" asked the Prince.

"Nay, I but saw the title page," replied Gotthold. "But the roll was given to me open, and I heard no word of any secrecy."

Otto dealt the Chancellor an angry glance.

"I see," he went on. "The papers of an author seized at this date of the world's history, in a state so petty and so ignorant as Grünewald, here is indeed an ignominious folly. Sir," to the Chancellor, "I marvel to find you in so scurvy an employment. On your conduct to your Prince I will not dwell; but to descend to be a spy! For what else can it be called? To seize the papers of this gentleman, the private papers of a stranger, the toil of a life, perhaps—to open, and to read them. And what have we to do with books? The Herr Doctor might perhaps be asked for his advice; but we have no *index expurgatorius* in Grünewald. Had we but that, we should be the most absolute parody and farce upon this tawdry earth."

Yet, even while Otto spoke, he had continued to unfold the roll; and now, when it lay fully open, his eye rested on the title page elaborately written in red ink. It ran thus:

"Memoirs
of a Visit to the Various
Courts of Europe,
by
Sir John Crabtree, Baronet."

Below was a list of chapters, each bearing the name of one of the European Courts; and among these the nineteenth and last upon the list was dedicated to Grünewald.

"Ah! The Court of Grünewald!" said Otto, "that should be droll reading." And his curiosity itched for it.

"A methodical dog, this English Baronet," said Gotthold. "Each chapter written and finished on the spot. I shall look for his work when it appears."

"It would be odd, now, just to glance at it," said Otto, wavering.

Gotthold's brow darkened, and he looked out of window.

But though the Prince understood the reproof, his weakness prevailed. "I will," he said, with an uneasy laugh, "I will, I think, just glance at it."

So saying, he resumed his seat and spread the traveller's manuscript upon the table.

CHAPTER II

"ON THE COURT OF GRÜNEWALD," BEING A PORTION OF THE TRAVELLER'S MANUSCRIPT

IT may well be asked (*it was thus the English traveller began his nineteenth chapter*) why I should have chosen Grünewald out of so many other states equally petty, formal, dull, and corrupt. Accident, indeed, decided, and not I; but I have seen no reason to regret my visit. The spectacle of this small society macerating in its own abuses was not perhaps instructive, but I have found it exceedingly diverting.

The reigning Prince, Otto Johann Friedrich, a young man of imperfect education, questionable valour, and no scintilla of capacity, has fallen into entire public contempt. It was with difficulty that I obtained an interview, for he is frequently absent from a court where his presence is unheeded, and where his only *rôle* is to be a cloak for the amours of his wife. At last, however, on the third occasion when I visited the palace, I found this sovereign in the exercise of his inglorious function, with the wife on one hand and the lover on the other.

He is not ill-looking; he has hair of a ruddy gold, which naturally curls, and his eyes are dark, a combination which I always regard as the mark of some congenital deficiency, physical or moral; his features are irregular but pleasing; the nose perhaps a little short, and the mouth a little womanish. His address is excellent, and he can express himself with point. But to pierce below these externals is to come on a vacuity of any sterling quality, a deliquescence of the moral nature, a frivolity and inconsequence of purpose that mark the nearly perfect fruit of a decadent age. He has a worthless smattering of many subjects, but a grasp of none. "I soon weary of a pursuit," he said to me, laughing; it would almost appear as if he took a pride in his incapacity and lack of moral courage. The results of his dilettantism are to be seen in every field; he is a bad fencer, a second-rate horseman, dancer, shot; he sings—I have heard him—and he sings like a child; he writes intolerable verses in more than doubtful French; he acts like the common amateur; and in short there is no end to the number of the things that he does, and does badly. His one manly taste is for the chase. In sum, he is but a plexus of weaknesses; the singing chambermaid of the stage, tricked out in man's apparel and mounted on a circus horse. I have seen this poor phantom of a prince riding out alone or with a few huntsmen, disregarded by

all, and I have been even grieved for the bearer of so futile and melancholy an existence. The last Merovingians may have looked not otherwise.

The Princess Amalia Seraphina, a daughter of the Grand Ducal house of Toggenburg-Tannhaüser, would be equally inconsiderable if she were not a cutting instrument in the hands of an ambitious man. She is much younger than the Prince, a girl of two-and-twenty, sick with vanity, superficially clever, and fundamentally a fool. She has a red-brown rolling eye, too large for her face, and with sparks of both levity and ferocity; her forehead is high and narrow, her figure thin and a little stooping. Her manners, her conversation, which she interlards with French, her very tastes and ambitions, are alike assumed; and the assumption is ungracefully apparent: Hoyden playing Cleopatra. I should judge her to be incapable of truth. In private life a girl of this description embroils the peace of families, walks attended by a troop of scowling swains, and passes, once at least, through the divorce court; it is a common and, except to the cynic, an uninteresting type. On the throne, however, and in the hands of a man like Gondremark, she may become the authoress of serious public evils.

Gondremark, the true ruler of this unfortunate country, is a more complex study. His position in Grünewald, to which he is a foreigner,

is eminently false; and that he should maintain it as he does, a very miracle of impudence and dexterity. His speech, his face, his policy, are all double: heads and tails. Which of the two extremes may be his actual design he were a bold man who should offer to decide. Yet I will hazard the guess that he follows both experimentally, and awaits, at the hand of destiny, one of those directing hints of which she is so lavish to the wise.

On the one hand, as *Maire de Palais* to the incompetent Otto, and using the love-sick Princess for a tool and mouth-piece, he pursues a policy of arbitrary power and territorial aggrandisement. He has called out the whole capable male population of the state to military service; he has bought cannon; he has tempted away promising officers from foreign armies; and he now begins, in his international relations, to assume the swaggering port and the vague threatful language of a bully. The idea of extending Grünewald may appear absurd, but the little state is advantageously placed, its neighbours are all defenceless; and if at any moment the jealousies of the greater courts should neutralise each other, an active policy might double the principality both in population and extent. Certainly at least the scheme is entertained in the court of Mittwalden; nor do I myself regard it as entirely desperate. The margravate of Brandenburg has grown

from as small beginnings to a formidable power; and though it is late in the day to try adventurous policies, and the age of war seems ended, Fortune, we must not forget, still blindly turns her wheel for men and nations. Concurrently with, and tributary to, these warlike preparations, crushing taxes have been levied, journals have been suppressed, and the country, which three years ago was prosperous and happy, now stagnates in a forced inaction, gold has become a curiosity, and the mills stand idle on the mountain streams.

On the other hand, in his second capacity of popular tribune, Gondremark is the incarnation of the free lodges, and sits at the centre of an organised conspiracy against the state. To any such movement my sympathies were early acquired, and I would not willingly let fall a word that might embarrass or retard the revolution. But to show that I speak of knowledge, and not as the reporter of mere gossip, I may mention that I have myself been present at a meeting where the details of a republican Constitution were minutely debated and arranged; and I may add that Gondremark was throughout referred to by the speakers as their captain in action and the arbiter of their disputes. He has taught his dupes (for so I must regard them) that his power of resistance to the Princess is limited, and at each fresh stretch of authority persuades them, with spe-

cious reasons, to postpone the hour of insurrection. Thus (to give some instances of his astute diplomacy) he salved over the decree enforcing military service, under the plea that to be well drilled and exercised in arms was even a necessary preparation for revolt. And the other day, when it began to be rumoured abroad that a war was being forced on a reluctant neighbour, the Grand Duke of Gerolstein, and I made sure it would be the signal for an instant rising, I was struck dumb with wonder to find that even this had been prepared and was to be accepted. I went from one to another in the Liberal camp, and all were in the same story, all had been drilled and schooled and fitted out with vacuous argument. "The lads had better see some real fighting," they said; "and besides, it will be as well to capture Gerolstein: we can then extend to our neighbours the blessing of liberty on the same day that we snatch it for ourselves; and the republic will be all the stronger to resist, if the kings of Europe should band themselves together to reduce it." I know not which of the two I should admire the more: the simplicity of the multitude or the audacity of the adventurer. But such are the subtleties, such the quibbling reasons, with which he blinds and leads this people. How long a course so tortuous can be pursued with safety I am incapable of guessing; not long, one would suppose; and yet this singular man has been tread-

ing the mazes for five years, and his favour at court and his popularity among the lodges still endure unbroken.

I have the privilege of slightly knowing him. Heavily and somewhat clumsily built, of a vast, disjointed, rambling frame, he can still pull himself together, and figure, not without admiration, in the saloon or the ball-room. His hue and temperament are plentifully bilious; he has a saturnine eye; his cheek is of a dark blue where he has been shaven. Essentially he is to be numbered among the man-haters, a convinced contemner of his fellows. Yet he is himself of a commonplace ambition and greedy of applause. In talk, he is remarkable for a thirst of information, loving rather to hear than to communicate; for sound and studious views; and, judging by the extreme short-sightedness of common politicians, for a remarkable prevision of events. All this, however, without grace, pleasantry, or charm, heavily set forth, with a dull countenance. In our numerous conversations, although he has always heard me with deference, I have been conscious throughout of a sort of ponderous finessing hard to tolerate. He produces none of the effect of a gentleman; devoid not merely of pleasantry, but of all attention or communicative warmth of bearing. No gentleman, besides, would so parade his amours with the Princess; still less repay the Prince for his long-suffering with a studied insolence

of demeanour and the fabrication of insulting nicknames, such as Prince Featherhead, which run from ear to ear and create a laugh throughout the country. Gondremark has thus some of the clumsier characters of the self-made man, combined with an inordinate, almost a besotted, pride of intellect and birth. Heavy, bilious, selfish, inornate, he sits upon this court and country like an incubus.

But it is probable that he preserves softer gifts for necessary purposes. Indeed, it is certain, although he vouchsafed none of it to me, that this cold and stolid politician possesses to a great degree the art of ingratiation, and can be all things to all men. Hence there has probably sprung up the idle legend that in private life he is a gross, romping voluptuary. Nothing, at least, can well be more surprising than the terms of his connection with the Princess. Older than her husband, certainly uglier, and, according to the feeble ideas common among women, in every particular less pleasing, he has not only seized the complete command of all her thought and action, but has imposed on her in public a humiliating part. I do not here refer to the complete sacrifice of every rag of her reputation; for to many women these extremities are in themselves attractive. But there is about the court a certain lady of a dishevelled reputation, a Countess von Rosen, wife or widow of a cloudy count, no longer in

her second youth and already bereft of some of her attractions, who unequivocally occupies the station of the Baron's mistress. I had thought, at first, that she was but a hired accomplice, a mere blind or buffer for the more important sinner. A few hours' acquaintance with Madame von Rosen for ever dispelled the illusion. She is one rather to make than to prevent a scandal, and she values none of those bribes—money, honours, or employment—with which the situation might be gilded. Indeed, as a person frankly bad, she pleased me, in the court of Grünewald, like a piece of nature.

The power of this man over the Princess is, therefore, without bounds. She has sacrificed to the adoration with which he has inspired her not only her marriage vow and every shred of public decency, but that vice of jealousy which is so much dearer to the female sex than either intrinsic honour or outward consideration. Nay, more: a young, although not a very attractive woman, and a Princess both by birth and fact, she submits to the triumphant rivalry of one who might be her mother as to years, and who is so manifestly her inferior in station. This is one of the mysteries of the human heart. But the rage of illicit love, when it is once indulged, appears to grow by feeding; and to a person of the character and temperament of this unfortunate young lady, almost any depth of degradation is within the reach of possibility.

CHAPTER III

THE PRINCE AND THE ENGLISH TRAVELLER

SO far Otto read, with waxing indignation; and here his fury overflowed. He tossed the roll upon the table and stood up. "This man," he said, "is a devil. A filthy imagination, an ear greedy of evil, a ponderous malignity of thought and language; I grow like him by the reading! Chancellor, where is this fellow lodged?"

"He was committed to the Flag Tower," replied Greisengesang, "in the Gamiani apartment."

"Lead me to him," said the Prince; and then a thought striking him, "Was it for that," he asked, "that I found so many sentries in the garden?"

"Your Highness, I am unaware," answered Greisengesang, true to his policy. "The disposition of the guards is a matter distinct from my functions."

Otto turned upon the old man fiercely, but ere he had time to speak, Gotthold touched

him on the arm. He swallowed his wrath with a great effort. "It is well," he said, taking the roll. "Follow me to the Flag Tower."

The Chancellor gathered himself together, and the two set forward. It was a long and complicated voyage; for the library was in the wing of the new buildings, and the tower which carried the flag was in the old schloss upon the garden. By a great variety of stairs and corridors, they came out at last upon a patch of gravelled court; the garden peeped through a high grating with a flash of green; tall, old, gabled buildings mounted on every side; the Flag Tower climbed, stage after stage, into the blue; and high over all, among the building daws, the yellow flag wavered in the wind. A sentinel at the foot of the tower stairs presented arms; another paced the first landing; and a third was stationed before the door of the extemporised prison.

"We guard this mud-bag like a jewel," Otto sneered.

The Gamiani apartment was so called from an Italian doctor who had imposed on the credulity of a former prince. The rooms were large, airy, pleasant, and looked upon the garden; but the walls were of great thickness (for the tower was old), and the windows were heavily barred. The Prince, followed by the Chancellor, still trotting to keep up with him, brushed swiftly through the little

library and the long saloon, and burst like a thunderbolt into the bedroom at the farther end. Sir John was finishing his toilet; a man of fifty, hard, uncompromising, able, with the eye and teeth of physical courage. He was unmoved by the irruption, and bowed with a sort of sneering ease.

"To what am I to attribute the honour of this visit?" he asked.

"You have eaten my bread," replied Otto, "you have taken my hand, you have been received under my roof. When did I fail you in courtesy? What have you asked that was not granted as to an honoured guest? And here, sir," tapping fiercely on the manuscript, "here is your return."

"Your Highness has read my papers?" said the Baronet. "I am honoured indeed. But the sketch is most imperfect. I shall now have much to add. I can say that the Prince, whom I had accused of idleness, is zealous in the department of police, taking upon himself those duties that are most distasteful. I shall be able to relate the burlesque incident of my arrest, and the singular interview with which you honour me at present. For the rest, I have already communicated with my Ambassador at Vienna; and unless you propose to murder me, I shall be at liberty, whether you please or not, within the week. For I hardly fancy the future empire of Grünewald is yet ripe

to go to war with England. I conceive I am a little more than quits. I owe you no explanation; yours has been the wrong. You, if you have studied my writing with intelligence, owe me a large debt of gratitude. And to conclude, as I have not yet finished my toilet, I imagine the courtesy of a turnkey to a prisoner would induce you to withdraw."

There was some paper on the table, and Otto, sitting down, wrote a passport in the name of Sir John Crabtree.

"Affix the seal, Herr Cancellarius," he said, in his most princely manner, as he rose.

Greisengesang produced a red portfolio, and affixed the seal in the unpoetic guise of an adhesive stamp; nor did his perturbed and clumsy movements at all lessen the comedy of the performance. Sir John looked on with a malign enjoyment; and Otto chafed, regretting, when too late, the unnecessary royalty of his command and gesture. But at length the Chancellor had finished his piece of prestidigitation, and, without waiting for an order, had countersigned the passport. Thus regularised, he returned it to Otto with a bow.

"You will now," said the Prince, "order one of my own carriages to be prepared; see it, with your own eyes, charged with Sir John's effects, and have it waiting within the hour behind the Pheasant House. Sir John departs this morning for Vienna."

The Chancellor took his elaborate departure.

"Here, sir, is your passport," said Otto, turning to the Baronet. "I regret it from my heart that you have met inhospitable usage."

"Well, there will be no English war," returned Sir John.

"Nay, sir," said Otto, "you surely owe me your civility. Matters are now changed, and we stand again upon the footing of two gentlemen. It was not I who ordered your arrest; I returned late last night from hunting; and as you cannot blame me for your imprisonment, you may even thank me for your freedom."

"And yet you read my papers," said the traveller, shrewdly.

"There, sir, I was wrong," returned Otto; "and for that I ask your pardon. You can scarce refuse it, for your own dignity, to one who is a plexus of weaknesses. Nor was the fault entirely mine. Had the papers been innocent, it would have been at most an indiscretion. Your own guilt is the sting of my offence."

Sir John regarded Otto with an approving twinkle; then he bowed, but still in silence.

"Well, sir, as you are now at your entire disposal, I have a favour to beg of your indulgence," continued the Prince. "I have to request that you will walk with me alone into the garden so soon as your convenience permits."

"From the moment that I am a free man," Sir John replied, this time with perfect courtesy.

"I am wholly at your Highness's command; and if you will excuse a rather summary toilet, I will even follow you as I am."

"I thank you, sir," said Otto.

So without more delay, the Prince leading, the pair proceeded down through the echoing stairway of the tower, and out through the grating, into the ample air and sunshine of the morning, and among the terraces and flower-beds of the garden. They crossed the fish-pond, where the carp were leaping as thick as bees; they mounted, one after another, the various flights of stairs, snowed upon, as they went, with April blossoms, and marching in time to the great orchestra of birds. Nor did Otto pause till they had reached the highest terrace of the garden. Here was a gate into the park, and hard by, under a tuft of laurel, a marble garden seat. Hence they looked down on the green tops of many elm-trees, where the rooks were busy; and, beyond that, upon the palace roof, and the yellow banner flying in the blue.

"I pray you to be seated, sir," said Otto.

Sir John complied without a word; and for some seconds Otto walked to and fro before him, plunged in angry thought. The birds were all singing for a wager.

"Sir," said the Prince at length, turning towards the Englishman, "you are to me, except by the conventions of society, a perfect stranger. Of your character and wishes I am ignorant.

I have never wittingly disobliged you. There is a difference in station, which I desire to waive. I would, if you still think me entitled to so much consideration—I would be regarded simply as a gentleman. Now, sir, I did wrong to glance at these papers, which I here return to you; but if curiosity be undignified, as I am free to own, falsehood is both cowardly and cruel. I opened your roll; and what did I find—what did I find about my wife? Lies!" he broke out. "They are lies! There are not, so help me God! four words of truth in your intolerable libel! You are a man; you are old, and might be the girl's father; you are a gentleman; you are a scholar, and have learned refinement; and you rake together all this vulgar scandal, and propose to print it in a public book! Such is your chivalry! But, thank God, sir, she has still a husband. You say, sir, in that paper in your hand, that I am a bad fencer; I have to request from you a lesson in the art. The park is close behind; yonder is the Pheasant House, where you will find your carriage; should I fall, you know, sir—you have written it in your paper—how little my movements are regarded; I am in the custom of disappearing; it will be one more disappearance, and long before it has awakened a remark, you may be safe across the border."

"You will observe," said Sir John, "that what you ask is impossible."

"And if I struck you?" cried the Prince, with a sudden menacing flash.

"It would be a cowardly blow," returned the Baronet, unmoved, "for it would make no change. I can not draw upon a reigning sovereign."

"And it is this man, to whom you dare not offer satisfaction, that you choose to insult!" cried Otto.

"Pardon me," said the traveller, "you are unjust. It is because you are a reigning sovereign that I cannot fight with you; and it is for the same reason that I have a right to criticise your action and your wife. You are in everything a public creature; you belong to the public, body and bone. You have with you the law, the muskets of the army, and the eyes of spies. We, on our side, have but one weapon —truth."

"Truth!" echoed the Prince, with a gesture.

There was another silence.

"Your Highness," said Sir John at last, "you must not expect grapes from a thistle. I am old and a cynic. Nobody cares a rush for me; and on the whole, after the present interview, I scarce know anybody that I like better than yourself. You see, I have changed my mind, and have the uncommon virtue to avow the change. I tear up this stuff before you, here in your own garden; I ask your pardon, I ask the pardon of the Princess; and I give you my

word of honour as a gentleman and an old man, that when my book of travels shall appear it shall not contain so much as the name of Grünewald. And yet it was a racy chapter! But had your Highness only read about the other courts! I am a carrion crow; but it is not my fault, after all, that the world is such a nauseous kennel."

"Sir," said Otto, "is the eye not jaundiced?"

"Nay," cried the traveller, "very likely. I am one who goes sniffing; I am no poet. I believe in a better future for the world; or, at all accounts, I do most potently disbelieve in the present. Rotten eggs is the burthen of my song. But indeed, your Highness, when I meet with any merit, I do not think that I am slow to recognise it. This is a day that I shall still recall with gratitude, for I have found a sovereign with some manly virtues; and for once—old courtier and old radical as I am—it is from the heart and quite sincerely that I can request the honour of kissing your Highness's hand?"

"Nay, sir," said Otto, "to my heart!"

And the Englishman, taken at unawares, was clasped for a moment in the Prince's arms.

"And now, sir," added Otto, "there is the Pheasant House; close behind it you will find my carriage, which I pray you to accept. God speed you to Vienna!"

"In the impetuosity of youth," replied Sir

John, "your Highness has overlooked one circumstance. I am still fasting."

"Well, sir," said Otto, smiling, "you are your own master; you may go or stay. But I warn you, your friend may prove less powerful than your enemies. The Prince, indeed, is thoroughly on your side; he has all the will to help; but to whom do I speak?—you know better than I do, he is not alone in Grünewald."

"There is a deal in position," returned the traveller, gravely nodding. "Gondremark loves to temporise; his policy is below ground, and he fears all open courses; and now that I have seen you act with so much spirit, I will cheerfully risk myself on your protection. Who knows? You may be yet the better man."

"Do you indeed believe so?" cried the Prince. "You put life into my heart!"

"I will give up sketching portraits," said the Baronet. "I am a blind owl; I had misread you strangely. And yet remember this; a sprint is one thing, and to run all day another. For I still mistrust your constitution; the short nose, the hair and eyes of several complexions; no, they are diagnostic; and I must end, I see, as I began."

"I am still a singing chambermaid?" said Otto.

"Nay, your Highness, I pray you to forget what I had written," said Sir John; "I am not like Pilate; and the chapter is no more. Bury it, if you love me."

CHAPTER IV

WHILE THE PRINCE IS IN THE ANTE-ROOM . . .

GREATLY comforted by the exploits of the morning, the Prince turned towards the Princess's ante-room, bent on a more difficult enterprise. The curtains rose before him, the usher called his name, and he entered the room with an exaggeration of his usual mincing and airy dignity. There were about a score of persons waiting, principally ladies; it was one of the few societies in Grünewald where Otto knew himself to be popular; and while a maid of honour made her exit by a side door to announce his arrival to the Princess, he moved round the apartment, collecting homage and bestowing compliments, with friendly grace. Had this been the sum of his duties, he had been an admirable monarch. Lady after lady was impartially honoured by his attention.

"Madam," he said to one, "how does this happen? I find you daily more adorable."

"And your Highness daily browner," replied the lady. "We began equal; O, there I will be

bold: we have both beautiful complexions. But while I study mine, your Highness tans himself."

"A perfect negro, madam; and what so fitly—being beauty's slave?" said Otto. "Madame Grafinski, when is our next play? I have just heard that I am a bad actor."

"*O ciel!*" cried Madame Grafinski. "Who could venture? What a bear!"

"An excellent man, I can assure you," returned Otto.

"O, never! O, is it possible!" fluted the lady. "Your Highness plays like an angel."

"You must be right, madam; who could speak falsely and yet look so charming?" said the Prince. "But this gentleman, it seems, would have preferred me playing like an actor."

A sort of hum, a falsetto, feminine cooing, greeted the tiny sally; and Otto expanded like a peacock. This warm atmosphere of women and flattery and idle chatter pleased him to the marrow.

"Madame von Eisenthal, your coiffure is delicious," he remarked.

"Every one was saying so," said one.

"If I have pleased Prince Charming?" And Madame von Eisenthal swept him a deep curtsey with a killing glance of adoration.

"It is new?" he asked. "Vienna fashion."

"Mint new," replied the lady, "for your Highness's return. I felt young this morning;

it was a premonition. But why, Prince, do you ever leave us?"

"For the pleasure of the return," said Otto. "I am like a dog; I must bury my bone, and then come back to gloat upon it."

"O, a bone! Fie, what a comparison! You have brought back the manners of the wood," returned the lady.

"Madam, it is what the dog has dearest," said the Prince. "But I observe Madame von Rosen."

And Otto, leaving the group to which he had been piping, stepped towards the embrasure of a window where a lady stood.

The Countess von Rosen had hitherto been silent, and a thought depressed, but on the approach of Otto she began to brighten. She was tall, slim as a nymph, and of a very airy carriage; and her face, which was already beautiful in repose, lightened and changed, flashed into smiles, and glowed with lovely colour at the touch of animation. She was a good vocalist; and, even in speech, her voice commanded a great range of changes; the low notes rich with tenor quality, the upper ringing, on the brink of laughter, into music. A gem of many facets and variable hues of fire; a woman who withheld the better portion of her beauty, and then, in a caressing second, flashed it like a weapon full on the beholder; now merely a tall figure and a sallow handsome face, with

the evidences of a reckless temper: anon opening like a flower to life and colour, mirth and tenderness:—Madame von Rosen had always a dagger in reserve for the despatch of ill-assured admirers. She met Otto with the dart of tender gaiety.

"You have come to me at last, Prince Cruel," she said. "Butterfly! Well, and am I not to kiss your hand?" she added.

"Madam, it is I who must kiss yours." And Otto bowed and kissed it.

"You deny me every indulgence," she said, smiling.

"And now what news in Court?" inquired the Prince. "I come to you for my gazette."

"Ditch-water!" she replied. "The world is all asleep, grown grey in slumber; I do not remember any waking movement since quite an eternity; and the last thing in the nature of a sensation was the last time my governess was allowed to box my ears. But yet I do myself and your unfortunate enchanted palace some injustice. Here is the last—O positively!" And she told him the story from behind her fan, with many glances, many cunning strokes of the narrator's art. The others had drawn away, for it was understood that Madame von Rosen was in favour with the Prince. None the less, however, did the Countess lower her voice at times to within a semitone of whispering; and the pair leaned together over the narrative.

"Do you know," said Otto, laughing, "you are the only entertaining woman on this earth!"

"O, you have found out so much!" she cried.

"Yes, madam, I grow wiser with advancing years," he returned.

"Years!" she repeated. "Do you name the traitors? I do not believe in years; the calendar is a delusion."

"You must be right, madam," replied the Prince. "For six years that we have been good friends, I have observed you to grow younger."

"Flatterer!" cried she, and then with a change, "But why should I say so," she added, "when I protest I think the same? A week ago I had a council with my father director, the glass, and the glass replied, 'Not yet!' I confess my face in this way once a month. O! a very solemn moment. Do you know what I shall do when the mirror answers, 'Now'?"

"I cannot guess," said he.

"No more can I," returned the Countess. "There is such a choice! Suicide, gambling, a nunnery, a volume of memoirs, or politics—the last, I am afraid."

"It is a dull trade," said Otto.

"Nay," she replied, "it is a trade I rather like. It is, after all, first cousin to gossip, which no one can deny to be amusing. For instance, if I were to tell you that the Princess and the Baron rode out together daily to inspect

the cannon, it is either a piece of politics or scandal, as I turn my phrase. I am the alchemist that makes the transmutation. They have been everywhere together since you left," she continued, brightening as she saw Otto darken; "that is a poor snippet of malicious gossip—and they were everywhere cheered—and with that addition all becomes political intelligence."

"Let us change the subject," said Otto.

"I was about to propose it," she replied, "or rather to pursue the politics. Do you know? this war is popular—popular to the length of cheering Princess Seraphina."

"All things, madam, are possible," said the Prince; "and this among others, that we may be going into war, but I give you my word of honour I do not know with whom."

"And you put up with it?" she cried. "I have no pretensions to morality; and I confess I have always abominated the lamb, and nourished a romantic feeling for the wolf. O, be done with lambiness! Let us see there is a prince, for I am weary of the distaff."

"Madam," said Otto, "I thought you were of that faction."

"I should be of yours, *mon Prince*, if you had one," she retorted. "Is it true that you have no ambition? There was a man once in England whom they call the kingmaker. Do you know," she added, "I fancy I could make a prince?"

"Some day, madam," said Otto, "I may ask you to help make a farmer."

"Is that a riddle?" asked the Countess.

"It is," replied the Prince, "and a very good one too."

"Tit for tat. I will ask you another," she returned. "Where is Gondremark?"

"The Prime Minister? In the prime-ministry, no doubt," said Otto.

"Precisely," said the Countess; and she pointed with her fan to the door of the Princess's apartments. "You and I, *mon Prince*, are in the ante-room. You think me unkind," she added. "Try me and you will see. Set me a task, put me a question; there is no enormity I am not capable of doing to oblige you, and no secret that I am not ready to betray."

"Nay, madam, but I respect my friend too much," he answered, kissing her hand. "I would rather remain ignorant of all. We fraternise like foemen soldiers at the outposts, but let each be true to his own army."

"Ah," she cried, "if all men were generous like you, it would be worth while to be a woman!" Yet, judging by her looks, his generosity, if anything, had disappointed her; she seemed to seek a remedy, and, having found it, brightened once more. "And now," she said, "may I dismiss my sovereign? This is rebellion and a *cas pendable;* but what am I to do? My bear is jealous!"

"Madam, enough!" cried Otto. "Ahasuerus reaches you the sceptre; more, he will obey you in all points. I should have been a dog to come to whistling."

And so the Prince departed, and fluttered round Grafinski and von Eisenthal. But the Countess knew the use of her offensive weapons, and had left a pleasant arrow in the Prince's heart. That Gondremark was jealous—here was an agreeable revenge! And Madame von Rosen, as the occasion of the jealousy, appeared to him in a new light.

CHAPTER V

. . . GONDREMARK IS IN MY LADY'S CHAMBER

THE Countess von Rosen spoke the truth. The great Prime Minister of Grünewald was already closeted with Seraphina. The toilet was over; and the Princess, tastefully arrayed, sat face to face with a tall mirror. Sir John's description was unkindly true, true in terms and yet a libel, a misogynistic masterpiece. Her forehead was perhaps too high, but it became her; her figure somewhat stooped, but every detail was formed and finished like a gem; her hand, her foot, her ear, the set of her comely head, were all dainty and accordant; if she was not beautiful, she was vivid, changeful, coloured, and pretty with a thousand various prettinesses; and her eyes, if they indeed rolled too consciously, yet rolled to purpose. They were her most attractive feature, yet they continually bore eloquent false witness to her thoughts; for while she herself, in the depths of her immature, unsoftened heart, was given altogether to manlike ambition and the desire

of power, the eyes were by turns bold, inviting, fiery, melting, and artful, like the eyes of a rapacious siren. And artful, in a sense, she was. Chafing that she was not a man and could not shine by action, she had conceived a woman's part, of answerable domination; she sought to subjugate for by-ends, to rain influence and be fancy free; and while she loved not man, loved to see man obey her. It is a common girl's ambition. Such was perhaps that lady of the glove, who sent her lover to the lions. But the snare is laid alike for male and female, and the world most artfully contrived.

Near her, in a low chair, Gondremark had arranged his limbs into a cat-like attitude, high-shouldered, stooping, and submiss. The formidable blue jowl of the man, and the dull bilious eye, set perhaps a higher value on his evident desire to please. His face was marked by capacity, temper, and a kind of bold, piratical dishonesty which it would be calumnious to call deceit. His manners, as he smiled upon the Princess, were overfine, yet hardly elegant.

"Possibly," said the Baron, "I should now proceed to take my leave. I must not keep my sovereign in the ante-room. Let us come at once to a decision."

"It cannot, cannot be put off?" she asked.

"It is impossible," answered Gondremark. "Your Highness sees it for herself. In the earlier stages, we might imitate the serpent;

but for the ultimatum, there is no choice but to be bold like lions. Had the Prince chosen to remain away, it had been better; but we have gone too far forward to delay."

"What can have brought him?" she cried. "To-day of all days?"

"The marplot, madam, has the instinct of his nature," returned Gondremark. "But you exaggerate the peril. Think, madam, how far we have prospered, and against what odds! Shall a Featherhead?—but no!" And he blew upon his fingers lightly with a laugh.

"Featherhead," she replied, "is still the Prince of Grünewald."

"On your sufferance only, and so long as you shall please to be indulgent," said the Baron. "There are rights of nature; power to the powerful is the law. If he shall think to cross your destiny—well, you have heard of the brazen and the earthen pot."

"Do you call me pot? You are ungallant, Baron," laughed the Princess.

"Before we are done with your glory, I shall have called you by many different titles," he replied.

The girl flushed with pleasure. "But Frédéric is still the Prince, *monsieur le flatteur*," she said. "You do not propose a revolution?—you of all men?"

"Dear madam, when it is already made!" he cried. "The Prince reigns indeed in the

almanac; but my Princess reigns and rules." And he looked at her with a fond admiration that made the heart of Seraphina swell. Looking on her huge slave, she drank the intoxicating joys of power. Meanwhile he continued, with that sort of massive archness that so ill became him, "She has but one fault; there is but one danger in the great career that I foresee for her. May I name it? may I be so irreverent? It is in herself—her heart is soft."

"Her courage is faint, Baron," said the Princess. "Suppose we have judged ill, suppose we were defeated?"

"Defeated, madam?" returned the Baron, with a touch of ill-humour. "Is the dog defeated by the hare? Our troops are all cantoned along the frontier; in five hours the vanguard of five thousand bayonets shall be hammering on the gates of Brandenau; and in all Gerolstein there are not fifteen hundred men who can manœuvre. It is as simple as a sum. There can be no resistance."

"It is no great exploit," she said. "Is that what you call glory? It is like beating a child."

"The courage, madam, is diplomatic," he replied. "We take a grave step; we fix the eyes of Europe, for the first time, on Grünewald; and in the negotiations of the next three months, mark me, we stand or fall. It is there, madam, that I shall have to depend upon your counsels," he added, almost gloomily. "If I had not

seen you at work, if I did not know the fertility of your mind, I own I should tremble for the consequence. But it is in this field that men must recognise their inability. All the great negotiators, when they have not been women, have had women at their elbows. Madame de Pompadour was ill served; she had not found her Gondremark; but what a mighty politician! Catherine de Medici, too, what justice of sight, what readiness of means, what elasticity against defeat! But alas! madam, her Featherheads were her own children; and she had that one touch of vulgarity, that one trait of the good-wife, that she suffered family ties and affections to confine her liberty."

These singular views of history, strictly *ad usum Seraphinæ*, did not weave their usual soothing spell over the Princess. It was plain that she had taken a momentary distaste to her own resolutions; for she continued to oppose her counsellor, looking upon him out of half-closed eyes and with the shadow of a sneer upon her lips. "What boys men are!" she said; "what lovers of big words! Courage, indeed! If you had to scour pans, Herr von Gondremark, you would call it, I suppose, Domestic Courage?"

"I would, madam," said the Baron, stoutly, "if I scoured them well. I would put a good name upon a virtue; you will not overdo it; they are not so enchanting in themselves."

"Well, but let me see," she said. "I wish to understand your courage. Why we asked leave, like children! Our grannie in Berlin, our uncle in Vienna, the whole family, have patted us on the head and sent us forward. Courage? I wonder when I hear you!"

"My Princess is unlike herself," returned the Baron. "She has forgotten where the peril lies. True, we have received encouragement on every hand; but my Princess knows too well on what untenable conditions; and she knows besides how, in the publicity of the diet, these whispered conferences are forgotten and disowned. The danger is very real"—he raged inwardly at having to blow the very coal he had been quenching—"none the less real in that it is not precisely military, but for that reason the easier to be faced. Had we to count upon your troops, although I share your Highness's expectations of the conduct of Alvenau, we cannot forget that he has not been proved in chief command. But where negotiation is concerned, the conduct lies with us; and with your help, I laugh at danger."

"It may be so," said Seraphina, sighing. "It is elsewhere that I see danger. The people, these abominable people—suppose they should instantly rebel? What a figure we should make in the eyes of Europe to have undertaken an invasion while my own throne was tottering to its fall!"

"Nay, madam," said Gondremark, smiling, "here you are beneath yourself. What is it that feeds their discontent? What but the taxes? Once we have seized Gerolstein, the taxes are remitted, the sons return covered with renown, the houses are adorned with pillage, each tastes his little share of military glory, and behold us once again a happy family! 'Ay,' they will say, in each other's long ears, 'the Princess knew what she was about; she was in the right of it; she has a head upon her shoulders; and here we are, you see, better off than before.' But why should I say all this? It is what my Princess pointed out to me herself; it was by these reasons that she converted me to this adventure."

"I think, Herr von Gondremark," said Seraphina, somewhat tartly, "you often attribute your own sagacity to your Princess."

For a second Gondremark staggered under the shrewdness of the attack; the next, he had perfectly recovered. "Do I?" he said. "It is very possible. I have observed a similar tendency in your Highness."

It was so openly spoken, and appeared so just, that Seraphina breathed again. Her vanity had been alarmed, and the greatness of the relief improved her spirits. "Well," she said, "all this is little to the purpose. We are keeping Frédéric without, and I am still ignorant of our line of battle. Come, co-admiral, let us

consult. . . . How am I to receive him now? And what are we to do if he should appear at the council?"

"Now," he answered. "I shall leave him to my Princess for just now! I have seen her at work. Send him off to his theatricals! But in all gentleness," he added. "Would it, for instance, would it displease my sovereign to affect a headache?"

"Never!" said she. "The woman who can manage, like the man who can fight, must never shrink from an encounter. The knight must not disgrace his weapons."

"Then let me pray my *belle dame sans merci*," he returned, "to affect the only virtue that she lacks. Be pitiful to the poor young man; affect an interest in his hunting; be weary of politics; find in his society, as it were, a grateful repose from dry considerations. Does my Princess authorise the line of battle?"

"Well, that is a trifle," answered Seraphina. "The council—there is the point."

"The council?" cried Gondremark. "Permit me, madam." And he rose and proceeded to flutter about the room, counterfeiting Otto both in voice and gesture not unhappily. "What is there to-day, Herr von Gondremark? Ah, Herr Cancellarius, a new wig! You cannot deceive me; I know every wig in Grünewald; I have the sovereign's eye. What are these papers about? O, I see, O, certainly. Surely,

surely. I wager none of you remarked that wig. By all means. I know nothing about that. Dear me, are there as many as all that? Well, you can sign them; you have the procuration. You see, Herr Cancellarius, I knew your wig. And so," concluded Gondremark, resuming his own voice, "our sovereign, by the particular grace of God, enlightens and supports his privy councillors."

But when the Baron turned to Seraphina for approval, he found her frozen. "You are pleased to be witty, Herr von Gondremark," she said, "and have perhaps forgotten where you are. But these rehearsals are apt to be misleading. Your master, the Prince of Grünewald, is sometimes more exacting."

Gondremark cursed her in his soul. Of all injured vanities, that of the reproved buffoon is the most savage; and when grave issues are involved, these petty stabs become unbearable. But Gondremark was a man of iron; he showed nothing; he did not even, like the common trickster, retreat because he had presumed, but held to his point bravely. "Madam," he said, "if, as you say, he prove exacting, we must take the bull by the horns."

"We shall see," she said, and she arranged her skirt like one about to rise. Temper, scorn, disgust, all the more acrid feelings, became her like jewels; and she now looked her best.

"Pray God they quarrel," thought Gondre-

mark. "The damned minx may fail me yet, unless they quarrel. It is time to let him in. Zz—fight, dogs!" Consequent on these reflections, he bent a stiff knee and chivalrously kissed the Princess's hand. "My Princess," he said, "must now dismiss her servant. I have much to arrange against the hour of council."

"Go," she said, and rose.

And as Gondremark tripped out of a private door, she touched a bell, and gave the order to admit the Prince.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRINCE DELIVERS A LECTURE ON MARRIAGE, WITH PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF DIVORCE

WITH what a world of excellent intentions Otto entered his wife's cabinet! how fatherly, how tender! how morally affecting were the words he had prepared! Nor was Seraphina unamiably inclined. Her usual fear of Otto as a marplot in her great designs was now swallowed up in a passing distrust of the designs themselves. For Gondremark, besides, she had conceived an angry horror. In her heart she did not like the Baron. Behind his impudent servility, behind the devotion which, with indelicate delicacy, he still forced on her attention, she divined the grossness of his nature. So a man may be proud of having tamed a bear, and yet sicken at his captive's odour. And above all, she had certain jealous intimations that the man was false, and the deception double. True, she falsely trifled with his love; but he, perhaps, was only trifling with her vanity. The insolence of his late mimicry, and the odium of her own position as she sat and watched

it, lay besides like a load upon her conscience. She met Otto almost with a sense of guilt, and yet she welcomed him as a deliverer from ugly things.

But the wheels of an interview are at the mercy of a thousand ruts; and even at Otto's entrance, the first jolt occurred. Gondremark, he saw, was gone; but there was the chair drawn close for consultation; and it pained him not only that this man had been received, but that he should depart with such an air of secrecy. Struggling with this twinge, it was somewhat sharply that he dismissed the attendant who had brought him in.

"You make yourself at home, *chez moi*," she said, a little ruffled both by his tone of command and by the glance he had thrown upon the chair.

"Madam," replied Otto, "I am here so seldom that I have almost the rights of a stranger."

"You choose your own associates, Frédéric," she said.

"I am here to speak of it," he returned. "It is now four years since we were married; and these four years, Seraphina, have not perhaps been happy either for you or for me. I am well aware I was unsuitable to be your husband. I was not young, I had no ambition, I was a trifler; and you despised me, I dare not say unjustly. But to do justice on both sides, you must bear in mind how I have acted. When

I found it amused you to play the part of Princess on this little stage, did I not immediately resign to you my box of toys, this Grünewald? And when I found I was distasteful as a husband, could any husband have been less intrusive? You will tell me that I have no feelings, no preference, and thus no credit; that I go before the wind; that all this was in my character. And indeed, one thing is true, that it is easy, too easy, to leave things undone. But, Seraphina, I begin to learn it is not always wise. If I were too old and too uncongenial for your husband, I should still have remembered that I was the Prince of that country to which you came, a visitor and a child. In that relation also there were duties, and these duties I have not performed."

To claim the advantage of superior age is to give sure offence. "Duty!" laughed Seraphina, "and on your lips, Frédéric! You make me laugh. What fancy is this? Go, flirt with the maids and be a Prince in Dresden china, as you look. Enjoy yourself, *mon enfant*, and leave duty and the state to us."

The plural grated on the Prince. "I have enjoyed myself too much," he said, "since enjoyment is the word. And yet there were much to say upon the other side. You must suppose me desperately fond of hunting. But indeed there were days when I found a great deal of interest in what it was courtesy to call

my government. And I have always had some claim to taste; I could tell live happiness from dull routine; and between hunting, and the throne of Austria, and your society, my choice had never wavered, had the choice been mine. You were a girl, a bud, when you were given me——"

"Heavens!" she cried, "is this to be a love-scene?"

"I am never ridiculous," he said; "it is my only merit; and you may be certain this shall be a scene of marriage *à la mode*. But when I remember the beginning, it is bare courtesy to speak in sorrow. Be just, madam: you would think me strangely uncivil to recall these days without the decency of a regret. Be yet a little juster, and own, if only in complaisance, that you yourself regret that past."

"I have nothing to regret," said the Princess. "You surprise me. I thought you were so happy."

"Happy and happy, there are so many hundred ways," said Otto. "A man may be happy in revolt; he may be happy in sleep; wine, change, and travel make him happy; virtue, they say, will do the like—I have not tried; and they say also that in old, quiet, and habitual marriages there is yet another happiness. Happy, yes; I am happy if you like; but I will tell you frankly, I was happier when I brought you home."

"Well," said the Princess, not without constraint, "it seems you changed your mind."

"Not I," returned Otto, "I never changed. Do you remember, Seraphina, on our way home, when you saw the roses in the lane, and I got out and plucked them? It was a narrow lane between great trees; the sunset at the end was all gold, and the rooks were flying overhead. There were nine, nine red roses; you gave me a kiss for each, and I told myself that every rose and every kiss should stand for a year of love. Well, in eighteen months there was an end. But do you fancy, Seraphina, that my heart has altered?"

"I am sure I cannot tell," she said, like an automaton.

"It has not," the Prince continued. "There is nothing ridiculous, even from a husband, in a love that owns itself unhappy and that asks no more. I built on sand; pardon me, I do not breathe a reproach—I built, I suppose, upon my own infirmities; but I put my heart in the building, and it still lies among the ruins."

"How very poetical!" she said with a little choking laugh, unknown relentings, unfamiliar softnesses, moving within her. "What would you be at?" she added, hardening her voice.

"I would be at this," he answered; "and hard it is to say. I would be at this:—Seraphina, I am your husband after all, and a poor fool that loves you. Understand," he cried almost

fiercely, "I am no suppliant husband; what your love refuses I would scorn to receive from your pity. I do not ask, I would not take it. And for jealousy, what ground have I? A dog-in-the-manger jealousy is a thing the dogs may laugh at. But at least, in the world's eye, I am still your husband; and I ask you if you treat me fairly? I keep to myself, I leave you free, I have given you in everything your will. What do you in return? I find, Seraphina, that you have been too thoughtless. But between persons such as we, in our conspicuous station, particular care and a particular courtesy are owing. Scandal is perhaps not easy to avoid; but it is hard to bear."

"Scandal!" she cried, with a deep breath. "Scandal! It is for this you have been driving!"

"I have tried to tell you how I feel," he replied. "I have told you that I love you—love you in vain—a bitter thing for a husband; I have laid myself open that I might speak without offence. And now that I have begun, I will go on and finish."

"I demand it," she said. "What is this about?"

Otto flushed crimson. "I have to say what I would fain not," he answered. "I counsel you to see less of Gondremark."

"Of Gondremark? And why?" she asked.

"Your intimacy is the ground of scandal, madam," said Otto, firmly enough—"of a scan-

dal that is agony to me, and would be crushing to your parents if they knew it."

"You are the first to bring me word of it," said she. "I thank you."

"You have perhaps cause," he replied. "Perhaps I am the only one among your friends——"

"O, leave my friends alone," she interrupted. "My friends are of a different stamp. You have come to me here and made a parade of sentiment. When have I last seen you? I have governed your kingdom for you in the meanwhile, and there I got no help. At last, when I am weary with a man's work, when you are weary of your playthings, you return to make me a scene of conjugal reproaches—the grocer and his wife! The positions are too much reversed; and you should understand, at least, that I cannot at the same time do your work of government and behave myself like a little girl. Scandal is the atmosphere in which we live, we princes; it is what a prince should know. You play an odious part. Do you believe this rumour?"

"Madam, should I be here?" said Otto.

"It is what I want to know!" she cried, the tempest of her scorn increasing. "Suppose you did—I say, suppose you did believe it?"

"I should make it my business to suppose the contrary," he answered.

"I thought so. O, you are made of baseness!" said she.

"Madam," he cried, roused at last, "enough of this. You wilfully misunderstand my attitude; you outwear my patience. In the name of your parents, in my own name, I summon you to be more circumspect."

"Is this a request, *monsieur mon mari?*" she demanded.

"Madam, if I chose, I might command," said Otto.

"You might, sir, as the law stands, make me a prisoner," returned Seraphina. "Short of that you will gain nothing."

"You will continue as before?" he asked.

"Precisely as before," said she. "As soon as this comedy is over, I shall request the Freiherr von Gondremark to visit me. Do you understand?" she added, rising. "For my part, I have done."

"I will then ask the favour of your hand, madam," said Otto, palpitating in every pulse with anger. "I have to request that you will visit in my society another part of my poor house. And reassure yourself—it will not take long—and it is the last obligation that you shall have the chance to lay me under."

"The last?" she cried. "Most joyfully!"

She offered her hand, and he took it; on each side with an elaborate affectation, each inwardly incandescent. He led her out by the private door, following where Gondremark had passed; they threaded a corridor or two, little frequented,

looking on a court, until they came at last into the Prince's suite. The first room was an armoury, hung all about with the weapons of various countries, and looking forth on the front terrace.

"Have you brought me here to slay me?" she inquired.

"I have brought you, madam, only to pass on," replied Otto.

Next they came to a library, where an old chamberlain sat half asleep. He rose and bowed before the princely couple, asking for orders.

"You will attend us here," said Otto.

The next stage was a gallery of pictures, where Seraphina's portrait hung conspicuous, dressed for the chase, red roses in her hair, as Otto, in the first months of marriage, had directed. He pointed to it without a word; she raised her eyebrows in silence; and they passed still forward into a matted corridor where four doors opened. One led to Otto's bedroom; one was the private door to Seraphina's. And here, for the first time, Otto left her hand, and stepping forward, shot the bolt.

"It is long, madam," said he, "since it was bolted on the other side."

"One was effectual," returned the Princess. "Is this all?"

"Shall I reconduct you?" he asked, bowing.

"I should prefer," she asked, in ringing tones, "the conduct of the Freiherr von Gondremark."

Otto summoned the chamberlain. "If the

Freiherr von Gondremark is in the palace," he said, "bid him attend the Princess here." And when the official had departed, "Can I do more to serve you, madam?" the Prince asked.

"Thank you, no. I have been much amused," she answered.

"I have now," continued Otto, "given you your liberty complete. This has been for you a miserable marriage."

"Miserable!" said she.

"It has been made light to you; it shall be lighter still," continued the Prince. "But one thing, madam, you must still continue to bear—my father's name, which is now yours. I leave it in your hands. Let me see you, since you will have no advice of mine, apply the more attention of your own to bear it worthily."

"Herr von Gondremark is long in coming," she remarked.

"O Seraphina, Seraphina!" he cried. And that was the end of their interview.

She tripped to a window and looked out; and a little after, the chamberlain announced the Freiherr von Gondremark, who entered with something of a wild eye and changed complexion, confounded, as he was, at this unusual summons. The Princess faced round from the window with a pearly smile; nothing but her heightened colour spoke of discomposure. Otto was pale, but he was otherwise master of himself.

"Herr von Gondremark," said he, "oblige

me so far: reconduct the Princess to her own apartment."

The Baron, still at sea, offered his hand, which was smilingly accepted, and the pair sailed forth through the picture-gallery.

As soon as they were gone, and Otto knew the length and breadth of his miscarriage, and how he had done the contrary of all that he intended, he stood stupefied. A fiasco so complete and sweeping was laughable, even to himself; and he laughed aloud in his wrath. Upon this mood there followed the sharpest violence of remorse; and to that again, as he recalled his provocation, anger succeeded afresh. So he was tossed in spirit; now bewailing his inconsequence and lack of temper, now flaming up in white-hot indignation and a noble pity for himself.

He paced his apartment like a leopard. There was danger in Otto, for a flash. Like a pistol, he could kill at one moment, and the next he might be kicked aside. But just then, as he walked the long floors in his alternate humours, tearing his handkerchief between his hands, he was strung to his top note, every nerve attent. The pistol, you might say, was charged. And when jealousy from time to time fetched him a lash across the tenderest of his feeling, and sent a string of her fire-pictures glancing before his mind's eye, the contraction of his face was even dangerous. He

disregarded jealousy's inventions, yet they stung. In this height of his anger, he still preserved his faith in Seraphina's innocence; but the thought of her possible misconduct was the bitterest ingredient in his pot of sorrow.

There came a knock at the door, and the chamberlain brought him a note. He took it and ground it in his hand, continuing his march, continuing his bewildered thoughts; and some minutes had gone by before the circumstance came clearly to his mind. Then he paused and opened it. It was a pencil scratch from Gotthold, thus conceived:

> "The council is privately summoned at once.
>
> G. v. H."

If the council was thus called before the hour, and that privately, it was plain they feared his interference. Feared: here was a sweet thought. Gotthold, too—Gotthold, who had always used and regarded him as a mere pleasant lad, had now been at the pains to warn him; Gotthold looked for something at his hands. Well, none should be disappointed; the Prince, too long beshadowed by the uxorious lover, should now return and shine. He summoned his valet, repaired the disorder of his appearance with elaborate care; and then, curled and scented and adorned, Prince Charming in every line, but with a twitching nostril, he set forth unattended for the council.

CHAPTER VII

THE PRINCE DISSOLVES THE COUNCIL

IT was as Gotthold wrote. The liberation of Sir John, Greisengesang's uneasy narrative, last of all, the scene between Seraphina and the Prince, had decided the conspirators to take a step of bold timidity. There had been a period of bustle, liveried messengers speeding here and there with notes; and at half-past ten in the morning, about an hour before its usual hour, the council of Grünewald sat around the board.

It was not a large body. At the instance of Gondremark, it had undergone a strict purgation, and was now composed exclusively of tools. Three secretaries sat at a side-table. Seraphina took the head; on her right was the Baron, on her left Greisengesang; below these Grafinski the treasurer, Count Eisenthal, a couple of non-combatants, and, to the surprise of all, Gotthold. He had been named a privy councillor by Otto, merely that he might profit by the salary; and as he was never known to attend a meeting,

it had occurred to nobody to cancel his appointment. His present appearance was the more ominous, coming when it did. Gondremark scowled upon him; and the non-combatant on his right, intercepting this black look, edged away from one who was so clearly out of favour.

"The hour presses, your Highness," said the Baron; "may we proceed to business?"

"At once," replied Seraphina.

"Your Highness will pardon me," said Gotthold; "but you are still, perhaps, unacquainted with the fact that Prince Otto has returned."

"The Prince will not attend the council," replied Seraphina, with a momentary blush. "The despatches, Herr Cancellarius? There is one for Gerolstein?"

A secretary brought a paper.

"Here, madam," said Greisengesang. "Shall I read it?"

"We are all familiar with its terms," replied Gondremark. "Your Highness approves?"

"Unhesitatingly," said Seraphina.

"It may then be held as read," concluded the Baron. "Will your Highness sign?"

The Princess did so; Gondremark, Eisenthal, and one of the non-combatants followed suit; and the paper was then passed across the table to the librarian. He proceeded leisurely to read.

"We have no time to spare, Herr Doctor," cried the Baron, brutally. "If you do not choose to sign on the authority of your sovereign,

pass it on. Or you may leave the table," he added, his temper ripping out.

"I decline your invitation, Herr von Gondremark; and my sovereign, as I continue to observe with regret, is still absent from the board," replied the Doctor, calmly; and he resumed the perusal of the paper, the rest chafing and exchanging glances. "Madam and gentlemen," he said, at last, "what I hold in my hand is simply a declaration of war."

"Simply," said Seraphina, flashing defiance.

"The sovereign of this country is under the same roof with us," continued Gotthold, "and I insist he shall be summoned. It is needless to adduce my reasons; you are all ashamed at heart of this projected treachery."

The council waved like a sea. There were various outcries.

"You insult the Princess," thundered Gondremark.

"I maintain my protest," replied Gotthold.

At the height of this confusion the door was thrown open; an usher announced, "Gentlemen, the Prince!" and Otto, with his most excellent bearing, entered the apartment. It was like oil upon the troubled waters; every one settled instantly into his place, and Greisengesang, to give himself a countenance, became absorbed in the arrangement of his papers; but in their eagerness to dissemble, one and all neglected to rise.

"Gentlemen," said the Prince, pausing.

They all got to their feet in a moment; and this reproof still further demoralised the weaker brethren.

The Prince moved slowly towards the lower end of the table; then he paused again, and, fixing his eye on Greisengesang, "How comes it, Herr Cancellarius," he asked, "that I have received no notice of the change of hour?"

"Your Highness," replied the Chancellor, "her Highness the Princess. . ." and there paused.

"I understood," said Seraphina, taking him up, "that you did not purpose to be present."

Their eyes met for a second, and Seraphina's fell; but her anger only burned the brighter for that private shame.

"And now, gentlemen," said Otto, taking his chair, "I pray you to be seated. I have been absent: there are doubtless some arrears; but ere we proceed to business, Herr Grafinski, you will direct four thousand crowns to be sent to me at once. Make a note, if you please," he added, as the treasurer still stared in wonder.

"Four thousand crowns?" asked Seraphina. "Pray, for what?"

"Madam," returned Otto, smiling, "for my own purposes."

Gondremark spurred up Grafinski underneath the table.

"If your Highness will indicate the destination . . ." began the puppet.

"You are not here, sir, to interrogate your Prince," said Otto.

Grafinski looked for help to his commander; and Gondremark came to his aid, in suave and measured tones.

"Your Highness may reasonably be surprised," he said; "and Herr Grafinski, although I am convinced he is clear of the intention of offending, would have perhaps done better to begin with an explanation. The resources of the state are at the present moment entirely swallowed up, or, as we hope to prove, wisely invested. In a month from now, I do not question we shall be able to meet any command your Highness may lay upon us; but at this hour I fear that, even in so small a matter, he must prepare himself for disappointment. Our zeal is no less, although our power may be inadequate."

"How much, Herr Grafinski, have we in the treasury?" asked Otto.

"Your Highness," protested the treasurer, "we have immediate need of every crown."

"I think, sir, you evade me," flashed the Prince, and then turning to the side table, "Mr. Secretary," he added, "bring me, if you please, the treasury docket."

Herr Grafinski became deadly pale; the chancellor, expecting his own turn, was probably engaged in prayer; Gondremark was watching

like a ponderous cat. Gotthold, on his part, looked on with wonder at his cousin; he was certainly showing spirit, but what, in such a time of gravity, was all this talk of money? and why should he waste his strength upon a personal issue?

"I find," said Otto, with his finger on the docket, "that we have 20,000 crowns in case."

"That is exact, your Highness," replied the Baron. "But our liabilities, all of which are happily not liquid, amount to a far larger sum; and at the present point of time, it would be morally impossible to divert a single florin. Essentially, the case is empty. We have, already presented, a large note for material of war."

"Material of war?" exclaimed Otto, with an excellent assumption of surprise. "But if my memory serves me right, we settled these accounts in January."

"There have been further orders," the Baron explained. "A new park of artillery has been completed; five hundred stand of arms, seven hundred baggage mules—the details are in a special memorandum.—Mr. Secretary Holtz, the memorandum, if you please."

"One would think, gentlemen, that we were going to war," said Otto.

"We are," said Seraphina.

"War!" cried the Prince, "and, gentlemen, with whom? The peace of Grünewald has en-

dured for centuries. What aggression, what insult, have we suffered?"

"Here, your Highness," said Gotthold, "is the ultimatum. It was in the very article of signature, when your Highness so opportunely entered."

Otto laid the paper before him; as he read, his fingers played tattoo upon the table. "Was it proposed," he inquired, "to send this paper forth without a knowledge of my pleasure?"

One of the non-combatants, eager to trim, volunteered an answer. "The Herr Doctor von Hohenstockwitz had just entered his dissent," he added.

"Give me the rest of this correspondence," said the Prince. It was handed to him, and he read it patiently from end to end, while the councillors sat foolishly enough looking before them on the table. The secretaries, in the background, were exchanging glances of delight; a row at the council was for them a rare and welcome feature.

"Gentlemen," said Otto, when he had finished, "I have read with pain. This claim upon Obermünsterol is palpably unjust, it has not a tincture, not a show, of justice. There is not in all this ground enough for after-dinner talk; and you propose to force it as a *casus belli*."

"Certainly, your Highness," returned Gondremark, too wise to defend the indefensible, "the claim on Obermünsterol is simply a pretext."

"It is well," said the Prince. "Herr Cancellarius, take your pen. 'The council,'" he began to dictate—"I withhold all notice of my intervention," he said, in parenthesis and addressing himself more directly to his wife; "and I say nothing of the strange suppression by which this business has been smuggled past my knowledge. I am content to be in time—'The council,'" he resumed, "'on a further examination of the facts, and enlightened by the note in the last despatch from Gerolstein, have the pleasure to announce that they are entirely at one, both as to fact and sentiment, with th Grand Ducal Court of Gerolstein.' You have it? Upon these lines, sir, you will draw up the despatch."

"If your Highness will allow me," said the Baron, "your Highness is so imperfectly acquainted with the internal history of this correspondence, that any interference will be merely hurtful. Such a paper as your Highness proposes, would be to stultify the whole previous policy of Grünewald."

"The policy of Grünewald!" cried the Prince. "One would suppose you had no sense of humour! Would you fish in a coffee cup?"

"With deference, your Highness," returned the Baron, "even in a coffee cup there may be poison. The purpose of this war is not simply territorial enlargement; still less is it a war of glory; for, as your Highness indicates, the state

of Grünewald is too small to be ambitious. But the body politic is seriously diseased; republicanism, socialism, many disintegrating ideas are abroad; circle within circle, a really formidable organisation has grown up about your Highness's throne."

"I have heard of it, Herr von Gondremark," put in the Prince; "but I have reason to be aware that yours is the more authoritative information."

"I am honoured by this expression of my Prince's confidence," returned Gondremark, unabashed. "It is, therefore, with a single eye to these disorders, that our present external policy has been shaped. Something was required to divert public attention, to employ the idle, to popularise your Highness's rule, and, if it were possible, to enable him to reduce the taxes at a blow and to a notable amount. The proposed expedition—for it cannot without hyperbole be called a war—seemed to the council to combine the various characters required; a marked improvement in the public sentiment has followed even upon our preparations; and I cannot doubt that when success shall follow, the effect will surpass even our boldest hopes."

"You are very adroit, Herr von Gondremark," said Otto. "You fill me with admiration. I had not heretofore done justice to your qualities."

Seraphina looked up with joy, supposing Otto conquered; but Gondremark still waited, armed

at every point; he knew how very stubborn is the revolt of a weak character.

"And the territorial army scheme, to which I was persuaded to consent—was it secretly directed to the same end?" the Prince asked.

"I still believe the effect to have been good," replied the Baron; "discipline and mounting guard are excellent sedatives. But I will avow to your Highness, I was unaware, at the date of that decree, of the magnitude of the revolutionary movement; nor did any of us, I think, imagine that such a territorial army was a part of the republican proposals."

"It was?" asked Otto. "Strange! Upon what fancied grounds?"

"The grounds were indeed fanciful," returned the Baron. "It was conceived among the leaders that a territorial army, drawn from and returning to the people, would, in the event of any popular uprising, prove lukewarm or unfaithful to the throne."

"I see," said the Prince. "I begin to understand."

"His Highness begins to understand?" repeated Gondremark, with the sweetest politeness. "May I beg of him to complete the phrase?"

"The history of the revolution," replied Otto, drily. "And now," he added, "what do you conclude?"

"I conclude, your Highness, with a simple

reflection," said the Baron, accepting the stab without a quiver, "the war is popular; were the rumour contradicted to-morrow, a considerable disappointment would be felt in many classes; and in the present tension of spirits, the most lukewarm sentiment may be enough to precipitate events. There lies the danger. The revolution hangs imminent; we sit, at this council board, below the sword of Damocles."

"We must then lay our heads together," said the Prince, "and devise some honourable means of safety."

Up to this moment, since the first note of opposition fell from the librarian, Seraphina had uttered about twenty words. With a somewhat heightened colour, her eyes generally lowered, her foot sometimes nervously tapping on the floor, she had kept her own counsel and commanded her anger like a hero. But at this stage of the engagement she lost control of her impatience.

"Means!" she cried. "They have been found and prepared before you knew the need for them. Sign the despatch, and let us be done with this delay."

"Madam, I said 'honourable,'" returned Otto, bowing. "This war is, in my eyes, and by Herr von Gondremark's account, an inadmissible expedient. If we have misgoverned here in Grünewald, are the people of Gerolstein to bleed and pay for our misdoings? Never,

madam; not while I live. But I attach so much importance to all that I have heard to-day for the first time—and why only to-day, I do not even stop to ask—that I am eager to find some plan that I can follow with credit to myself."

"And should you fail?" she asked.

"Should I fail, I will then meet the blow half-way," replied the Prince. "On the first open discontent, I shall convoke the States, and, when it pleases them to bid me, abdicate."

Seraphina laughed angrily. "This is the man for whom we have been labouring!" she cried. "We tell him of change; he will devise the means, he says; and his device is abdication? Sir, have you no shame to come here at the eleventh hour among those who have borne the heat and burthen of the day? Do you not wonder at yourself? I, sir, was here in my place, striving to uphold your dignity alone. I took counsel with the wisest I could find, while you were eating and hunting. I have laid my plans with foresight; they were ripe for action; and then—" she choked—"then you return—for a forenoon—to ruin all! To-morrow, you will be once more about your pleasures; you will give us leave once more to think and work for you; and again you will come back, and again you will thwart what you had not the industry or knowledge to conceive. O! it is intolerable. Be modest, sir.

Do not presume upon the rank you cannot worthily uphold. I would not issue my commands with so much gusto—it is from no merit in yourself they are obeyed. What are you? What have you to do in this grave council? Go," she cried, "go among your equals! The very people in the streets mock at you for a prince."

At this surprising outburst the whole council sat aghast.

"Madam," said the Baron, alarmed out of his caution, "command yourself."

"Address yourself to me, sir!" cried the Prince. "I will not bear these whisperings!"

Seraphina burst into tears.

"Sir," cried the Baron, rising, "this lady——"

"Herr von Gondremark," said the Prince, "one more observation, and I place you under arrest."

"Your Highness is the master," replied Gondremark, bowing.

"Bear it in mind more constantly," said Otto. "Herr Cancellarius, bring all the papers to my cabinet. Gentlemen, the council is dissolved."

And he bowed and left the apartment, followed by Greisengesang and the secretaries, just at the moment when the Princess's ladies, summoned in all haste, entered by another door to help her forth.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PARTY OF WAR TAKES ACTION

HALF an hour after, Gondremark was once more closeted with Seraphina.

"Where is he now?" she asked, on his arrival.

"Madam, he is with the Chancellor," replied the Baron. "Wonder of wonders, he is at work!"

"Ah," she said, "he was born to torture me! Oh, what a fall, what a humiliation! Such a scheme to wreck upon so small a trifle! But now all is lost."

"Madam," said Gondremark, "nothing is lost. Something, on the other hand, is found. You have found your senses; you see him as he is—see him as you see everything where your too-good heart is not in question—with the judicial, with the statesman's eye. So long as he had a right to interfere, the empire that may be was still distant. I have not entered on this course without the plain foresight of its dangers; and even for this I was prepared. But, madam, I knew two things: I knew that you were born to command, that I was born

to serve; I knew that by a rare conjuncture the hand had found the tool; and from the first I was confident, as I am confident to-day, that no hereditary trifler has the power to shatter that alliance."

"I, born to command!" she said. "Do you forget my tears?"

"Madam, they were the tears of Alexander," cried the Baron. "They touched, they thrilled me; I forgot myself a moment—even I! But do you suppose that I had not remarked, that I had not admired, your previous bearing? your great self-command? Ay, that was princely!" He paused. "It was a thing to see. I drank confidence! I tried to imitate your calm. And I was well inspired; in my heart, I think that I was well inspired; that any man, within the reach of argument, had been convinced! But it was not to be; nor, madam, do I regret the failure. Let us be open; let me disclose my heart. I have loved two things, not unworthily: Grünewald and my sovereign!" Here he kissed her hand. "Either I must resign my ministry, leave the land of my adoption and the queen whom I had chosen to obey—or——" He paused again.

"Alas, Herr von Gondremark, there is no 'or,'" said Seraphina.

"Nay, madam, give me time," he replied. "When first I saw you, you were still young; not every man would have remarked your

powers; but I had not been twice honoured by your conversation ere I had found my mistress. I have, madam, I believe, some genius; and I have much ambition. But the genius is of the serving kind; and to offer a career to my ambition, I had to find one born to rule. This is the base and essence of our union; each had need of the other; each recognised, master and servant, lever and fulcrum, the complement of his endowment. Marriages, they say, are made in heaven: how much much more these pure, laborious, intellectual fellowships, born to found empires! Nor is this all. We found each other ripe, filled with great ideas that took shape and clarified with every word. We grew together—ay, madam, in mind we grew together like twin children. All of my life until we met was petty and groping; was it not—I will flatter myself openly—it *was* the same with you! Not till then had you those eagle surveys, that wide and hopeful sweep of intuition! Thus we had formed ourselves, and we were ready."

"It is true," she cried. "I feel it. Yours is the genius; your generosity confounds your insight; all I could offer you was the position, was this throne, to be a fulcrum. But I offered it without reserve; I entered at least warmly into all your thoughts; you were sure of me—sure of my support—certain of justice. Tell me, tell me again, that I have helped you."

"Nay, madam," he said, "you made me. In

everything you were my inspiration. And as we prepared our policy, weighing every step, how often have I had to admire your perspicacity, your man-like diligence and fortitude! You know that these are not the words of flattery; your conscience echoes them; have you spared a day? have you indulged yourself in any pleasure? Young and beautiful, you have lived a life of high intellectual effort, of irksome intellectual patience with details. Well, you have your reward: with the fall of Brandenau, the throne of your Empire is founded."

"What thought have you in your mind?" she asked. "Is not all ruined?"

"Nay, my Princess, the same thought is in both our minds," he said.

"Herr von Gondremark," she replied, "by all that I hold sacred, I have none; I do not think at all; I am crushed."

"You are looking at the passionate side of a rich nature, misunderstood and recently insulted," said the Baron. "Look into your intellect, and tell me."

"I find nothing, nothing but tumult," she replied.

"You find one word branded, madam," returned the Baron: "'Abdication!'"

"O!" she cried. "The coward! He leaves me to bear all, and in the hour of trial he stabs me from behind. There is nothing in him, not respect, not love, not courage—his wife, his

dignity, his throne, the honour of his father, he forgets them all!"

"Yes," pursued the Baron, "the word Abdication. I perceive a glimmering there."

"I read your fancy," she returned. "It is mere madness, midsummer madness. Baron, I am more unpopular than he. You know it. They can excuse, they can love, his weakness; but me, they hate."

"Such is the gratitude of peoples," said the Baron. "But we trifle. Here, madam, are my plain thoughts. The man who in the hour of danger speaks of abdication is, for me, a venomous animal. I speak with the bluntness of gravity, madam; this is no hour for mincing. The coward, in a station of authority, is more dangerous than fire. We dwell on a volcano; if this man can have his way, Grünewald before a week will have been deluged with innocent blood. You know the truth of what I say; we have looked unblenching into this ever-possible catastrophe. To him it is nothing: he will abdicate! Abdicate, just God! and this unhappy country committed to his charge, and the lives of men and the honour of women . . ." His voice appeared to fail him; in an instant he had conquered his emotion and resumed: "But you, madam, conceive more worthily of your responsibilities. I am with you in the thought; and in the face of the horrors that I see impending, I say, and your heart

repeats it—we have gone too far to pause. Honour, duty, ay, and the care of our own lives, demand we should proceed."

She was looking at him, her brow thoughtfully knitted. "I feel it," she said. "But how? He has the power."

"The power, madam? The power is in the army," he replied; and then hastily, ere she could intervene, "we have to save ourselves," he went on; "I have to save my Princess, she has to save her minister; we have both of us to save this infatuated youth from his own madness. He in the outbreak would be the earliest victim; I see him," he cried, "torn in pieces; and Grünewald, unhappy Grünewald! Nay, madam, you who have the power must use it; it lies hard upon your conscience."

"Show me how!" she cried. "Suppose I were to place him under some constraint, the revolution would break upon us instantly."

The Baron feigned defeat. "It is true," he said. "You see more clearly than I do. Yet there should, there must be, some way." And he waited for his chance.

"No," she said; "I told you from the first there is no remedy. Our hopes are lost: lost by one miserable trifler, ignorant, fretful, fitful —who will have disappeared to-morrow, who knows? to his boorish pleasures!"

Any peg would do for Gondremark. "The thing!" he cried, striking his brow. "Fool,

not to have thought of it! Madam, without perhaps knowing it, you have solved our problem."

"What do you mean? Speak!" she said.

He appeared to collect himself; and then, with a smile, "The Prince," he said, "must go once more a-hunting."

"Ay, if he would!" cried she, "and stay there!"

"And stay there," echoed the Baron. It was so significantly said, that her face changed; and the schemer, fearful of the sinister ambiguity of his expression, hastened to explain. "This time he shall go hunting in a carriage, with a good escort of our foreign lancers. His destination shall be the Felsenburg; it is healthy, the rock is high, the windows are small and barred; it might have been built on purpose. We shall entrust the captaincy to the Scotsman Gordon; he at least will have no scruple. Who will miss the sovereign? He is gone hunting; he came home on Tuesday, on Thursday he returned; all is usual in that. Meanwhile the war proceeds; our Prince will soon weary of his solitude; and about the time of our triumph, or, if he prove very obstinate, a little later, he shall be released upon a proper understanding, and I see him once more directing his theatricals."

Seraphina sat gloomy, plunged in thought. "Yes," she said suddenly, "and the despatch? He is now writing it."

"It cannot pass the council before Friday," replied Gondremark; "and as for any private note, the messengers are all at my disposal. They are picked men, madam. I am a person of precaution."

"It would appear so," she said, with a flash of her occasional repugnance to the man; and then after a pause, "Herr von Gondremark," she added, "I recoil from this extremity."

"I share your Highness's repugnance," answered he. "But what would you have? We are defenceless, else."

"I see it, but this is sudden. It is a public crime," she said, nodding at him with a sort of horror.

"Look but a little deeper," he returned, "and whose is the crime?"

"His!" she cried. "His, before God! And I hold him liable. But still——"

"It is not as if he would be harmed," submitted Gondremark.

"I know it," she replied, but it was still unheartily.

And then, as brave men are entitled, by prescriptive right as old as the world's history, to the alliance and the active help of Fortune, the punctual goddess stepped down from the machine. One of the Princess's ladies begged to enter; a man, it appeared, had brought a line for the Freiherr von Gondremark. It proved to be a pencil billet, which the crafty Greisen-

gesang had found the means to scribble and despatch under the very guns of Otto; and the daring of the act bore testimony to the terror of the actor. For Greisengesang had but one influential motive: fear. The note ran thus: "At the first council, procuration to be withdrawn—*Corn. Greis.*"

So, after three years of exercise, the right of signature was to be stript from Seraphina. It was more than an insult; it was a public disgrace; and she did not pause to consider how she had earned it, but morally bounded under the attack as bounds the wounded tiger.

"Enough," she said; "I will sign the order. When shall he leave?"

"It will take me twelve hours to collect my men, and it had best be done at night. To-morrow midnight, if you please?" answered the Baron.

"Excellent," she said. "My door is always open to you, Baron. As soon as the order is prepared, bring it me to sign."

"Madam," he said, "alone of all of us you do not risk your head in this adventure. For that reason and to prevent all hesitation, I venture to propose the order should be in your hand throughout."

"You are right," she replied.

He laid a form before her, and she wrote the order in a clear hand, and re-read it. Suddenly a cruel smile came on her face. "I had for-

gotten his puppet," said she. "They will keep each other company." And she interlined and initialed the condemnation of Doctor Gotthold.

"Your Highness has more memory than your servant," said the Baron; and then he, in his turn, carefully perused the fateful paper. "Good!" said he.

"You will appear in the drawing-room, Baron?" she asked.

"I thought it better," said he, "to avoid the possibility of a public affront. Anything that shook my credit might hamper us in the immediate future."

"You are right," she said; and she held out her hand as to an old friend and equal.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRICE OF THE RIVER FARM; IN WHICH VAINGLORY GOES BEFORE A FALL

THE pistol had been practically fired. Under ordinary circumstances the scene at the council table would have entirely exhausted Otto's store both of energy and anger; he would have begun to examine and condemn his conduct, have remembered all that was true, forgotten all that was unjust in Seraphina's onslaught; and by half an hour after, would have fallen into that state of mind in which a Catholic flees to the confessional and a sot takes refuge with the bottle. Two matters of detail preserved his spirits. For, first, he had still an infinity of business to transact; and to transact business, for a man of Otto's neglectful and procrastinating habits, is the best anodyne for conscience. All afternoon he was hard at it with the Chancellor, reading, dictating, signing, and despatching papers; and this kept him in a glow of self-approval. But, secondly, his vanity was still alarmed; he had failed to get the money; to-morrow before noon he would

have to disappoint old Killian; and in the eyes of that family which counted him so little, and to which he had sought to play the part of the heroic comforter, he must sink lower than at first. To a man of Otto's temper, this was death. He could not accept the situation. And even as he worked, and worked wisely and well, over the hated details of his principality, he was secretly maturing a plan by which to turn the situation. It was a scheme as pleasing to the man as it was dishonourable in the prince; in which his frivolous nature found and took vengeance for the gravity and burthen of the afternoon. He chuckled as he thought it: and Greisengesang heard him with wonder, and attributed his lively spirits to the skirmish of the morning.

Led by this idea, the antique courtier ventured to compliment his sovereign on his bearing. It reminded him, he said, of Otto's father.

"What?" asked the Prince, whose thoughts were miles away.

"Your Highness's authority at the board," explained the flatterer.

"O, that! O yes," returned Otto; but for all his carelessness, his vanity was delicately tickled, and his mind returned and dwelt approvingly over the details of his victory. "I quelled them all," he thought.

When the more pressing matters had been dismissed, it was already late, and Otto kept

the Chancellor to dinner, and was entertained with a leash of ancient histories and modern compliments. The Chancellor's career had been based, from the first off-put, on entire subserviency; he had crawled into honours and employments; and his mind was prostitute. The instinct of the creature served him well with Otto. First, he let fall a sneering word or two upon the female intellect; thence he proceeded to a closer engagement; and before the third course he was artfully dissecting Seraphina's character to her approving husband. Of course no names were used; and of course the identity of that abstract or ideal man, with whom she was currently contrasted, remained an open secret. But this stiff old gentleman had a wonderful instinct for evil, thus to wind his way into man's citadel; thus to harp by the hour on the virtues of his hearer and not once alarm his self-respect. Otto was all roseate, in and out, with flattery and Tokay and an approving conscience. He saw himself in the most attractive colours. If even Greisengesang, he thought, could thus espy the loose stitches in Seraphina's character, and thus disloyally impart them to the opposite camp, he, the discarded husband —the dispossessed Prince—could scarce have erred on the side of severity.

In this excellent frame he bade adieu to the old gentleman, whose voice had proved so musical, and set forth for the drawing-room. Al-

ready on the stair he was seized with some compunction; but when he entered the great gallery and beheld his wife, the Chancellor's abstract flatteries fell from him like rain, and he re-awoke to the poetic facts of life. She stood a good way off below a shining lustre, her back turned. The bend of her waist overcame him with a physical weakness. This was the girl-wife who had lain in his arms and whom he had sworn to cherish; there was she, who was better than success.

It was Seraphina who restored him from the blow. She swam forward and smiled upon her husband with a sweetness that was insultingly artificial. "Frédéric," she lisped, "you are late." It was a scene of high comedy, such as is proper to unhappy marriages; and her *aplomb* disgusted him.

There was no etiquette at these small drawing-rooms. People came and went at pleasure. The window embrasures became the roost of happy couples; at the great chimney, the talkers mostly congregated, each full-charged with scandal; and down at the farther end the gamblers gambled. It was towards this point that Otto moved, not ostentatiously, but with a gentle insistence, and scattering attentions as he went. Once abreast of the card-table, he placed himself opposite to Madame von Rosen, and, as soon as he had caught her eye, withdrew to the embrasure of a window. There she had speedily joined him.

"You did well to call me," she said, a little wildly. "These cards will be my ruin."

"Leave them," said Otto.

"I!" she cried, and laughed; "they are my destiny. My only chance was to die of a consumption; now I must die in a garret."

"You are bitter to-night," said Otto.

"I have been losing," she replied. "You do not know what greed is."

"I have come, then, in an evil hour," said he.

"Ah, you wish a favour!" she cried, brightening beautifully.

"Madam," said he, "I am about to found my party, and I come to you for a recruit."

"Done," said the Countess. "I am a man again."

"I may be wrong," continued Otto, "but I believe upon my heart you wish me no ill."

"I wish you so well," she said, "that I dare not tell it you."

"Then if I ask my favour?" quoth the Prince.

"Ask it, *mon Prince*," she answered. "Whatever it is, it is granted."

"I wish you," he returned, "this very night to make the farmer of our talk."

"Heaven knows your meaning!" she exclaimed. "I know not, neither care; there are no bounds to my desire to please you. Call him made."

"I will put it in another way," returned Otto. "Did you ever steal?"

"Often!" cried the Countess. "I have broken all the ten commandments; and if there were more to-morrow I should not sleep till I had broken these."

"This is a case of burglary: to say truth, I thought it would amuse you," said the Prince.

"I have no practical experience," she replied, "but O! the good-will! I have broken a work-box in my time, and several hearts, my own included. Never a house! But it cannot be difficult; sins are so unromantically easy! What are we to break?"

"Madam, we are to break the treasury," said Otto; and he sketched to her briefly, wittily, with here and there a touch of pathos, the story of his visit to the farm, of his promise to buy it, and of the refusal with which his demand for money had been met that morning at the council; concluding with a few practical words as to the treasury windows, and the helps and hindrances of the proposed exploit.

"They refused you the money," she said, when he had done. "And you accepted the refusal? Well!"

"They gave their reasons," replied Otto, colouring. "They were not such as I could combat; and I am driven to dilapidate the funds of my own country by a theft. It is not dignified; but it is fun."

"Fun," she said; "yes." And then she remained silently plunged in thought for an

appreciable time. "How much do you require?" she asked at length.

"Three thousand crowns will do," he answered, "for I have still some money of my own."

"Excellent," she said, regaining her levity. "I am your true accomplice. And where are we to meet?"

"You know the Flying Mercury," he answered, "in the Park? Three pathways intersect; there they have made a seat and raised the statue. The spot is handy, and the deity congenial."

"Child," she said, and tapped him with her fan. "But do you know, my Prince, you are an egoist—your handy trysting-place is miles from me. You must give me ample time; I cannot, I think, possibly be there before two. But as the bell beats two, your helper shall arrive: welcome, I trust. Stay—do you bring any one?" she added. "O, it is not for a chaperone —I am not a prude!"

"I shall bring a groom of mine," said Otto. "I caught him stealing corn."

"His name?" she asked.

"I profess I know not. I am not yet intimate with my corn-stealer," returned the Prince. "It was in a professional capacity——"

"Like me! Flatterer!" she cried. "But oblige me in one thing. Let me find you waiting at the seat—yes, you shall await me; for on this expedition it shall be no longer Prince and Countess, it shall be the lady and the squire—

and your friend the thief shall be no nearer than the fountain. Do you promise?"

"Madam, in everything you are to command; you shall be captain, I am but supercargo," answered Otto.

"Well, Heaven bring all safe to port!" she said. "It is not Friday!"

Something in her manner had puzzled Otto, had possibly touched him with suspicion.

"Is it not strange," he remarked, "that I should choose my accomplice from the other camp?"

"Fool!" she said. "But it is your only wisdom that you know your friends." And suddenly, in the vantage of the deep window, she caught up his hand and kissed it with a sort of passion. "Now, go," she added, "go at once."

He went, somewhat staggered, doubting in his heart that he was over-bold. For in that moment she had flashed upon him like a jewel; and even through the strong panoply of a previous love he had been conscious of a shock. Next moment he had dismissed the fear.

Both Otto and the Countess retired early from the drawing-room; and the Prince, after an elaborate feint, dismissed his valet and went forth by the private passage and the back postern in quest of the groom.

Once more the stable was in darkness, once more Otto employed the talismanic knock, and

once more the groom appeared and sickened with terror.

"Good-evening, friend," said Otto, pleasantly. "I want you to bring á corn sack—empty this time—and to accompany me. We shall be gone all night."

"Your Highness," groaned the man, "I have the charge of the small stables. I am here alone."

"Come," said the Prince, "you are no such martinet in duty." And then seeing that the man was shaking from head to foot, Otto laid a hand upon his shoulder. "If I meant you harm," he said, "should I be here?"

The fellow became instantly reassured. He got the sack; and Otto led him round by several paths and avenues, conversing pleasantly by the way, and left him at last planted by a certain fountain where a goggle-eyed Triton spouted intermittently into a rippling laver. Thence he proceeded alone to where, in a round clearing, a copy of Gian Bologna's Mercury stood tiptoe in the twilight of the stars. The night was warm and windless. A shaving of new moon had lately arisen; but it was still too small and too low down in heaven to contend with the immense host of lesser luminaries; and the rough face of the earth was drenched with starlight. Down one of the alleys, which widened as it receded, he could see a part of the lamplit terrace where a sentry silently paced,

and beyond that a corner of the town with interlacing street-lights. But all around him the young trees stood mystically blurred in the dim shine; and in the stock-still quietness the up-leaping god appeared alive.

In this dimness and silence of the night, Otto's conscience became suddenly and staringly luminous like the dial of a city clock. He averted the eyes of his mind, but the finger, rapidly travelling, pointed to a series of misdeeds that took his breath away. What was he doing in that place? The money had been wrongly squandered, but that was largely by his own neglect. And he now proposed to embarrass the finances of this country which he had been too idle to govern. And he now proposed to squander the money once again, and this time for a private, if a generous end. And the man whom he had reproved for stealing corn, he was now to set stealing treasure. And then there was Madame von Rosen, upon whom he looked down with some of that ill-favoured contempt of the chaste male for the imperfect woman. Because he thought of her as one degraded below scruples, he had picked her out to be still more degraded, and to risk her whole irregular establishment in life by complicity in this dishonourable act. It was uglier than a seduction.

Otto had to walk very briskly and whistle very busily; and when at last he heard steps in the narrowest and darkest of the alleys, it was

with a gush of relief that he sprang to meet the Countess. To wrestle alone with one's good angel is so hard! and so precious, at the proper time, is a companion certain to be less virtuous than oneself!

It was a young man who came towards him —a young man of small stature and a peculiar gait, wearing a wide flapping hat, and carrying, with great weariness, a heavy bag. Otto recoiled; but the young man held up his hand by way of signal, and coming up with a panting run, as if with the last of his endurance, laid the bag upon the ground, threw himself upon the bench, and disclosed the features of Madame von Rosen.

"You, Countess!" cried the Prince.

"No, no," she panted, "the Count von Rosen —my young brother. A capital fellow. Let him get his breath."

"Ah, madam . . ." said he.

"Call me Count," she returned, "respect my incognito."

"Count be it, then," he replied. "And let me implore that gallant gentleman to set forth at once on our enterprise."

"Sit down beside me here," she returned, patting the farther corner of the bench. "I will follow you in a moment. O, I am so tired— feel how my heart leaps! Where is your thief?"

"At his post," replied Otto. "Shall I introduce him? He seems an excellent companion."

"No," she said, "do not hurry me yet. I must speak to you. Not but I adore your thief; I adore any one who has the spirit to do wrong. I never cared for virtue till I fell in love with my Prince." She laughed musically. "And even so, it is not for your virtues," she added.

Otto was embarrassed. "And now," he asked, "if you are anyway rested?"

"Presently, presently. Let me breathe," she said, panting a little harder than before.

"And what has so wearied you?" he asked. "This bag? And why, in the name of eccentricity, a bag? For an empty one, you might have relied on my own foresight; and this one is very far from being empty. My dear Count, with what trash have you come laden? But the shortest method is to see for myself." And he put down his hand.

She stopped him at once. "Otto," she said, "no—not that way. I will tell, I will make a clean breast. It is done already. I have robbed the treasury single-handed. There are three thousand two hundred crowns. O, I trust it is enough!"

Her embarrassment was so obvious that the Prince was struck into a muse, gazing in her face, with his hand still outstretched, and she still holding him by the wrist. "You!" he said, at last. "How?" And then drawing himself up, "O madam," he cried, "I understand. You must indeed think meanly of the Prince."

"Well then, it was a lie!" she cried. "The money is mine, honestly my own—now yours. This was an unworthy act that you proposed. But I love your honour, and I swore to myself that I should save it in your teeth. I beg of you to let me save it"—with a sudden lovely change of tone. "Otto, I beseech you let me save it. Take this dross from your poor friend who loves you!"

"Madam, madam," babbled Otto, in the extreme of misery, "I cannot—I must go."

And he half rose; but she was on the ground before him in an instant, clasping his knees. "No," she gasped, "you shall not go. Do you despise me so entirely? It is dross; I hate it; I should squander it at play and be no richer; it is an investment; it is to save me from ruin. Otto," she cried, as he again feebly tried to put her from him, "if you leave me alone in this disgrace, I will die here!" He groaned aloud. "O," she said, "think what I suffer! If you suffer from a piece of delicacy, think what I suffer in my shame! To have my trash refused! You would rather steal, you think of me so basely! You would rather tread my heart in pieces! O, unkind! O my Prince! O Otto! O pity me!" She was still clasping him; then she found his hand and covered it with kisses, and at this his head began to turn. "O," she cried again, "I see it! O what a horror! It is because I am old, because I am no

longer beautiful." And she burst into a storm of sobs.

This was the *coup de grâce.* Otto had now to comfort and compose her as he could, and before many words, the money was accepted. Between the woman and the weak man such was the inevitable end. Madame von Rosen instantly composed her sobs. She thanked him with a fluttering voice, and resumed her place upon the bench at the far end from Otto. "Now, you see," she said, "why I bade you keep the thief at distance, and why I came alone. How I trembled for my treasure!"

"Madam," said Otto, with a tearful whimper in his voice, "spare me! You are too good, too noble!"

"I wonder to hear you," she returned. "You have avoided a great folly. You will be able to meet your good old peasant. You have found an excellent investment for a friend's money. You have preferred essential kindness to an empty scruple; and now you are ashamed of it! You have made your friend happy; and now you mourn as the dove! Come, cheer up. I know it is depressing to have done exactly right; but you need not make a practice of it. Forgive yourself this virtue; come now, look me in the face and smile!"

He did look at her. When a man has been embraced by a woman, he sees her in a glamour; and at such a time, in the baffling glimmer of

the stars, she will look wildly well. The hair is touched with light; the eyes are constellations; the face sketched in shadows—a sketch, you might say, by passion. Otto became consoled for his defeat; he began to take an interest. "No," he said, "I am no ingrate."

"You promised me fun," she returned, with a laugh. "I have given you as good. We have had a stormy *scena*."

He laughed in his turn, and the sound of the laughter, in either case, was hardly reassuring.

"Come, what are you going to give me in exchange," she continued, "for my excellent declamation?"

"What you will," he said.

"Whatever I will? Upon your honour? Suppose I asked the crown?" She was flashing upon him, beautiful in triumph.

"Upon my honour," he replied.

"Shall I ask the crown?" she continued. "Nay; what should I do with it? Grünewald is but a petty state; my ambition swells above it. I shall ask—I find I want nothing," she concluded. "I will give you something instead. I will give you leave to kiss me—once."

Otto drew near, and she put up her face; they were both smiling, both on the brink of laughter, all was so innocent and playful; and the Prince, when their lips encountered, was dumbfounded by the sudden convulsion of his being. Both drew instantly apart, and for

an appreciable time sat tongue-tied. Otto was indistinctly conscious of a peril in the silence, but could find no words to utter. Suddenly the Countess seemed to awake. "As for your wife——" she began in a clear and steady voice.

The word recalled Otto, with a shudder, from his trance. "I will hear nothing against my wife," he cried wildly; and then, recovering himself and in a kindlier tone, "I will tell you my one secret," he added. "I love my wife."

"You should have let me finish," she returned, smiling. "Do you suppose I did not mention her on purpose? You know you had lost your head. Well, so had I. Come now, do not be abashed by words," she added, somewhat sharply. "It is the one thing I despise. If you are not a fool, you will see that I am building fortresses about your virtue. And at any rate I choose that you shall understand that I am not dying of love for you. It is a very smiling business; no tragedy for me! And now here is what I have to say about your wife: She is not and she never has been Gondremark's mistress. Be sure he would have boasted if she had. Good-night!"

And in a moment she was gone down the alley, and Otto was alone with the bag of money and the flying god.

CHAPTER X

GOTTHOLD'S REVISED OPINION; AND THE FALL COMPLETED

THE Countess left poor Otto with a caress and buffet simultaneously administered. The welcome word about his wife and the virtuous ending of his interview should doubtless have delighted him. But for all that, as he shouldered the bag of money and set forward to rejoin his groom, he was conscious of many aching sensibilities. To have gone wrong and to have been set right, makes but a double trial for man's vanity. The discovery of his own weakness and possible unfaith had staggered him to the heart; and to hear, in the same hour, of his wife's fidelity from one who loved her not, increased the bitterness of the surprise.

He was about half-way between the fountain and the Flying Mercury before his thoughts began to be clear; and he was surprised to find them resentful. He paused in a kind of temper, and struck with his hand a little shrub. Thence there arose instantly a cloud of awakened sparrows which as instantly dispersed and disappeared into the thicket. He looked at them

stupidly, and when they were gone continued staring at the stars. "I am angry. By what right? By none!" he thought; but he was still angry. He cursed Madame von Rosen and instantly repented. Heavy was the money on his shoulders.

When he reached the fountain, he did, out of ill-humour and parade, an unpardonable act. He gave the money bodily to the dishonest groom. "Keep this for me," he said, "until I call for it to-morrow. It is a great sum, and by that you will judge that I have not condemned you." And he strode away ruffling, as if he had done something generous. It was a desperate stroke to re-enter at the point of the bayonet into his self-esteem; and, like all such, it was fruitless in the end. He got to bed with the devil, it appeared: kicked and tumbled till the grey of the morning; and then fell inopportunely into a leaden slumber, and awoke to find it ten. To miss the appointment with old Killian after all, had been too tragic a miscarriage: and he hurried with all his might, found the groom (for a wonder) faithful to his trust, and arrived only a few minutes before noon in the guest-chamber of the Morning Star. Killian was there in his Sunday's best and looking very gaunt and rigid; a lawyer from Brandenau stood sentinel over his outspread papers; and the groom and the landlord of the inn were called to serve as witnesses. The

obvious deference of that great man, the innkeeper, plainly affected the old farmer with surprise; but it was not until Otto had taken the pen and signed that the truth flashed upon him fully. Then, indeed, he was beside himself.

"His Highness!" he cried, "His Highness!" and repeated the exclamation till his mind had grappled fairly with the facts. Then he turned to the witnesses. "Gentlemen," he said, "you dwell in a country highly favoured by God; for of all generous gentlemen, I will say it on my conscience, this one is the king. I am an old man, and I have seen good and bad, and the year of the great famine; but a more excellent gentleman, no, never."

"We know that," cried the landlord, "we know that well in Grünewald. If we saw more of his Highness we should be the better pleased."

"It is the kindest Prince," began the groom, and suddenly closed his mouth upon a sob, so that every one turned to gaze upon his emotion. Otto not last; Otto struck with remorse, to see the man so grateful.

Then it was the lawyer's turn to pay a compliment. "I do not know what Providence may hold in store," he said, "but this day should be a bright one in the annals of your reign. The shouts of armies could not be more eloquent than the emotion on these honest faces." And the Brandenau lawyer bowed, skipped, stepped

back and took snuff, with the air of a man who has found and seized an opportunity.

"Well, young gentleman," said Killian, "if you will pardon me the plainness of calling you a gentleman, many a good day's work you have done, I doubt not, but never a better, or one that will be better blessed; and whatever, sir, may be your happiness and triumph in that high sphere to which you have been called, it will be none the worse, sir, for an old man's blessing!"

The scene had almost assumed the proportions of an ovation; and when the Prince escaped he had but one thought: to go wherever he was most sure of praise. His conduct at the board of council occurred to him as a fair chapter; and this evoked the memory of Gotthold. To Gotthold he would go.

Gotthold was in the library as usual, and laid down his pen, a little angrily, on Otto's entrance. "Well," he said, "here you are."

"Well," returned Otto, "we made a revolution, I believe."

"It is what I fear," returned the Doctor.

"How?" said Otto. "Fear? Fear is the burnt child. I have learned my strength and the weakness of the others; and I now mean to govern."

Gotthold said nothing, but he looked down and smoothed his chin.

"You disapprove?" cried Otto. "You are a weathercock."

"On the contrary," replied the Doctor. "My observation has confirmed my fears. It will not do, Otto, not do."

"What will not do?" demanded the Prince, with a sickening stab of pain.

"None of it," answered Gotthold. "You are unfitted for a life of action; you lack the stamina, the habit, the restraint, the patience. Your wife is greatly better, vastly better; and though she is in bad hands, displays a very different aptitude. She is a woman of affairs; you are—dear boy, you are yourself. I bid you back to your amusements; like a smiling dominie, I give you holidays for life. Yes," he continued, "there is a day appointed for all when they shall turn again upon their own philosophy. I had grown to disbelieve impartially in all; and if in the atlas of the sciences there were two charts I disbelieved in more than all the rest, they were politics and morals. I had a sneaking kindness for your vices; as they were negative, they flattered my philosophy; and I called them almost virtues. Well, Otto, I was wrong; I have forsworn my sceptical philosophy; and I perceive your faults to be unpardonable. You are unfit to be a Prince, unfit to be a husband. And I give you my word, I would rather see a man capably doing evil, than blundering about good."

Otto was still silent, in extreme dudgeon.

Presently the Doctor resumed: "I will take

the smaller matter first; your conduct to your wife. You went, I hear, and had an explanation. That may have been right or wrong; I know not; at least, you had stirred her temper. At the council she insults you; well, you insult her back—a man to a woman, a husband to his wife, in public! Next upon the back of this, you propose—the story runs like wildfire—to recall the power of signature. Can she ever forgive that? a woman—a young woman—ambitious, conscious of talents beyond yours? Never, Otto. And to sum all, at such a crisis in your married life, you get into a window corner with that ogling dame von Rosen. I do not dream that there was any harm; but I do say it was an idle disrespect to your wife. Why, man, the woman is not decent."

"Gotthold," said Otto, "I will hear no evil of the Countess."

"You will certainly hear no good of her," returned Gotthold; "and if you wish your wife to be the pink of nicety, you should clear your court of demi-reputations."

"The commonplace injustice of a by-word," Otto cried. "The partiality of sex. She is a demi-rep; what then is Gondremark? Were she a man——"

"It would be all one," retorted Gotthold, roughly. "When I see a man, come to years of wisdom, who speaks in double-meanings and is the braggart of his vices, I spit on the other

side. 'You, my friend,' say I, 'are not even a gentleman.' Well, she's not even a lady."

"She is the best friend I have, and I choose that she shall be respected," Otto said.

"If she is your friend, so much the worse," replied the Doctor. "It will not stop there."

"Ah!" cried Otto, "there is the charity of virtue! All evil in the spotted fruit. But I can tell you, sir, that you do Madame von Rosen prodigal injustice."

"You can tell me!" said the Doctor, shrewdly. "Have you tried? have you been riding the marches?" The blood came into Otto's face.

"Ah!" cried Gotthold, "look at your wife and blush! There's a wife for a man to marry and then lose! She's a carnation, Otto. The soul is in her eyes."

"You have changed your note for Seraphina, I perceive," said Otto.

"Changed it!" cried the Doctor, with a flush. "Why, when was it different? But I own I admired her at the council. When she sat there silent, tapping with her foot, I admired her as I might a hurricane. Were I one of those who venture upon matrimony, there had been the prize to tempt me! She invites, as Mexico invited Cortez; the enterprise is hard, the natives are unfriendly —I believe them cruel too —but the metropolis is paved with gold and the breeze blows out of paradise. Yes, I could desire to be that conqueror. But to philander

with von Rosen; never! Senses? I discard them; what are they?—pruritus! Curiosity? Reach me my Anatomy!"

"To whom do you address yourself?" cried Otto. "Surely, you, of all men, know that I love my wife!"

"O, love!" cried Gotthold; "love is a great word; it is in all the dictionaries. If you had loved, she would have paid you back. What does she ask? A little ardour!"

"It is hard to love for two," replied the Prince.

"Hard? Why, there's the touchstone! O, I know my poets!" cried the Doctor. "We are but dust and fire, too arid to endure life's scorching; and love, like the shadow of a great rock, should lend shelter and refreshment, not to the lover only, but to his mistress and to the children that reward them; and their very friends should seek repose in the fringes of that peace. Love is not love that cannot build a home. And you call it love to grudge and quarrel and pick faults? You call it love to thwart her to her face and bandy insults? Love!"

"Gotthold, you are unjust. I was then fighting for my country," said the Prince.

"Ay, and there's the worst of all," returned the Doctor. "You could not even see that you were wrong; that being where they were, retreat was ruin."

"Why, you supported me!" cried Otto.

"I did. I was a fool like you," replied Gott-

hold. "But now my eyes are open. If you go on as you have started, disgrace this fellow Gondremark and publish the scandal of your divided house, there will befall a most abominable thing in Grünewald. A revolution, friend —a revolution."

"You speak strangely for a red," said Otto.

"A red republican, but not a revolutionary," returned the Doctor. "An ugly thing is a Grünewalder drunk! One man alone can save the country from this pass, and that is the double-dealer Gondremark, with whom I conjure you to make peace. It will not be you; it never can be you:—you, who can do nothing, as your wife said, but trade upon your station—you, who spent the hours in begging money! And in God's name, what for? Why money? What mystery of idiocy was this?"

"It was to no ill end. It was to buy a farm," quoth Otto, sulkily.

"To buy a farm!" cried Gotthold. "Buy a farm!"

"Well, what then?" returned Otto. "I have bought it, if you come to that."

Gotthold fairly bounded on his seat. "And how that?" he cried.

"How?" repeated Otto, startled.

"Ay, verily, how!" returned the Doctor. "How came you by the money?"

The Prince's countenance darkened. "That is my affair," said he.

"You see you are ashamed," retorted Gotthold. "And so you bought a farm in the hour of your country's need—doubtless to be ready for the abdication; and I put it that you stole the funds. There are not three ways of getting money: there are but two: to earn and steal. And now, when you have combined Charles the Fifth and Long-fingered Tom, you come to me to fortify your vanity! But I will clear my mind upon this matter: until I know the right and wrong of the transaction, I put my hand behind my back. A man may be the pitifullest prince, he must be a spotless gentleman."

The Prince had gotten to his feet, as pale as paper. "Gotthold," he said, "you drive me beyond bounds. Beware, sir, beware!"

"Do you threaten me, friend Otto?" asked the Doctor, grimly. "That would be a strange conclusion."

"When have you ever known me use my power in any private animosity?" cried Otto. "To any private man, your words were an unpardonable insult, but at me you shoot in full security, and I must turn aside to compliment you on your plainness. I must do more than pardon, I must admire, because you have faced this—this formidable monarch, like a Nathan before David. You have uprooted an old kindness, sir, with an unsparing hand. You leave me very bare. My last bond is broken; and though I take Heaven to witness that I

sought to do the right, I have this reward: to find myself alone. You say I am no gentleman; yet the sneers have been upon your side, and though I can very well perceive where you have lodged your sympathies, I will forbear the taunt."

"Otto, are you insane?" cried Gotthold, leaping up. "Because I ask you how you came by certain moneys, and because you refuse——"

"Herr von Hohenstockwitz, I have ceased to invite your aid in my affairs," said Otto. "I have heard all that I desire, and you have sufficiently trampled on my vanity. It may be that I cannot govern, it may be that I cannot love—you tell me so with every mark of honesty; but God has granted me one virtue, and I can still forgive. I forgive you; even in this hour of passion, I can perceive my faults and your excuses; and if I desire that in future I may be spared your conversation, it is not, sir, from resentment—not resentment—but, by Heaven, because no man on earth could endure to be so rated. You have the satisfaction to see your sovereign weep; and that person whom you have so often taunted with his happiness reduced to the last pitch of solitude and misery. No,—I will hear nothing; I claim the last word, sir, as your Prince; and that last word shall be—forgiveness."

And with that Otto was gone from the apartment, and Doctor Gotthold was left alone with

the most conflicting sentiments of sorrow, remorse, and merriment; walking to and fro before his table, and asking himself, with hands uplifted, which of the pair of them was most to blame for this unhappy rupture. Presently, he took from a cupboard a bottle of Rhine wine and a goblet of the deep Bohemian ruby. The first glass a little warmed and comforted his bosom; with the second he began to look down upon these troubles from a sunny mountain; yet a while, and filled with this false comfort and contemplating life throughout a golden medium, he owned to himself, with a flush, a smile, and a half-pleasurable sigh, that he had been somewhat over plain in dealing with his cousin. "He said the truth, too," added the penitent librarian, "for in my monkish fashion I adore the Princess." And then, with a still deepening flush and a certain stealth, although he sat all alone in that great gallery, he toasted Seraphina to the dregs.

CHAPTER XI

PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE FIRST: SHE BEGUILES THE BARON

AT a sufficiently late hour, or to be more exact, at three in the afternoon, Madame von Rosen issued on the world. She swept down-stairs and out across the garden, a black mantilla thrown over her head, and the long train of her black velvet dress ruthlessly sweeping in the dirt.

At the other end of that long garden, and back to back with the villa of the Countess, stood the large mansion where the Prime Minister transacted his affairs and pleasures. This distance, which was enough for decency by the easy canons of Mittwalden, the Countess swiftly traversed, opened a little door with a key, mounted a flight of stairs, and entered unceremoniously into Gondremark's study. It was a large and very high apartment; books all about the walls, papers on the table, papers on the floor; here and there a picture, somewhat scant of drapery; a great fire glowing and flaming in the blue tiled hearth; and the daylight streaming through a cupola above. In the midst

of this sat the Great Baron Gondremark, in his shirt-sleeves, his business for that day fairly at an end, and the hour arrived for relaxation. His expression, his very nature, seemed to have undergone a fundamental change. Gondremark at home appeared the very antipode of Gondremark on duty. He had an air of massive jollity that well became him; grossness and geniality sat upon his features; and along with his manners, he had laid aside his sly and sinister expression. He lolled there, sunning his bulk before the fire, a noble animal.

"Hey!" he cried. "At last!"

The Countess stepped into the room in silence, threw herself on a chair, and crossed her legs. In her lace and velvet, with a good display of smooth black stocking and of snowy petticoat, and with the refined profile of her face and slender plumpness of her body, she showed in singular contrast to the big, black, intellectual satyr by the fire.

"How often do you send for me?" she cried. "It is compromising."

Gondremark laughed. "Speaking of that," said he, "what in the devil's name were you about? You were not home till morning."

"I was giving alms," she said.

The Baron again laughed loud and long, for in his shirt-sleeves he was a very mirthful creature. "It is fortunate I am not jealous," he remarked. "But you know my way: pleasure

and liberty go hand in hand. I believe what I believe; it is not much, but I believe it. But now, to business. Have you not read my letter?"

"No," she said; "my head ached."

"Ah, well! then I have news indeed!" cried Gondremark. "I was mad to see you all last night and all this morning: for yesterday afternoon I brought my long business to a head; the ship has come home; one more dead lift, and I shall cease to fetch and carry for the Princess Ratafia. Yes, 'tis done. I have the order all in Ratafia's hand; I carry it on my heart. At the hour of twelve to-night, Prince Featherhead is to be taken in his bed and, like the bambino, whipped into a chariot; and by next morning he will command a most romantic prospect from the donjon of the Felsenburg. Farewell, Featherhead! The war goes on, the girl is in my hand; I have long been indispensable, but now I shall be sole. I have long," he added exultingly, "long carried this intrigue upon my shoulders, like Samson with the gates of Gaza; now I discharge that burthen."

She had sprung to her feet, a little paler. "Is this true?" she cried.

"I tell you a fact," he asseverated. "The trick is played."

"I will never believe it," she said. "An order? In her own hand? I will never believe it, Heinrich."

"I swear to you," said he.

"O, what do you care for oaths—or I either? What would you swear by? Wine, women, and song? It is not binding," she said. She had come quite close up to him and laid her hand upon his arm. "As for the order—no, Heinrich, never! I will never believe it. I will die ere I believe it. You have some secret purpose—what, I cannot guess— but not one word of it is true."

"Shall I show it you?" he asked.

"You cannot," she answered. "There is no such thing."

"Incorrigible Sadducee!" he cried. "Well, I will convert you; you shall see the order." He moved to a chair where he had thrown his coat, and then drawing forth and holding out a paper, "Read," said he.

She took it greedily, and her eye flashed as she perused it.

"Hey!" cried the Baron, "there falls a dynasty, and it was I that felled it; and I and you inherit!" He seemed to swell in stature; and next moment, with a laugh, he put his hand forward. "Give me the dagger," said he.

But she whisked the paper suddenly behind her back and faced him, lowering. "No, no," she said. "You and I have first a point to settle. Do you suppose me blind? She could never have given that paper but to one man, and that man her lover. Here you stand—

her lover, her accomplice, her master—O, I well believe it, for I know your power. But what am I?" she cried; "I, whom you deceive?"

"Jealousy!" cried Gondremark. "Anna, I would never have believed it! But I declare to you by all that's credible, that I am not her lover. I might be, I suppose; but I never yet durst risk the declaration. The chit is so unreal; a mincing doll; she will and she will not; there is no counting on her, by God! And hitherto I have had my own way without, and keep the lover in reserve. And I say, Anna," he added with severity, "you must break yourself of this new fit, my girl; there must be no combustion. I keep the creature under the belief that I adore her; and if she caught a breath of you and me, she is such a fool, prude, and dog in the manger, that she is capable of spoiling all."

"All very fine," returned the lady. "With whom do you pass your days? and which am I to believe, your words or your actions?"

"Anna, the devil take you, are you blind?" cried Gondremark. "You know me. Am I likely to care for such a preciosa? 'Tis hard that we should have been together for so long, and you should still take me for a troubadour. But if there is one thing that I despise and deprecate, it is all such figures in Berlin wool. Give me a human woman—like myself. You are my mate; you were made for me; you amuse me like the play. And what have I to gain that

I should pretend to you? If I do not love you, what use are you to me? Why, none. It is as clear as noonday."

"Do you love me, Heinrich?" she asked, languishing. "Do you truly?"

"I tell you," he cried, "I love you next after myself. I should be all abroad if I had lost you."

"Well, then," said she, folding up the paper and putting it calmly in her pocket, "I will believe you, and I join the plot. Count upon me. At midnight, did you say? It is Gordon, I see, that you have charged with it. Excellent; he will stick at nothing."

Gondremark watched her suspiciously. "Why do you take the paper?" he demanded. "Give it here."

"No," she returned; "I mean to keep it. It is I who must prepare the stroke; you cannot manage it without me; and to do my best I must possess the paper. Where shall I find Gordon? In his rooms?" She spoke with a rather feverish self-possession.

"Anna," he said sternly, the black, bilious countenance of his palace *rôle* taking the place of the more open favour of his hours at home, "I ask you for that paper. Once, twice, and thrice."

"Heinrich," she returned, looking him in the face, "take care. I will put up with no dictation."

Both looked dangerous; and the silence lasted for a measurable interval of time. Then she

made haste to have the first word; and with a laugh that rang clear and honest, "Do not be a child," she said. "I wonder at you. If your assurances are true, you can have no reason to mistrust me, nor I to play you false. The difficulty is to get the Prince out of the palace without scandal. His valets are devoted; his chamberlain a slave; and yet one cry might ruin all."

"They must be overpowered," he said, following her to the new ground, "and disappear along with him."

"And your whole scheme along with them!" she cried. "He does not take his servants when he goes a-hunting: a child could read the truth. No, no; the plan is idiotic; it must be Ratafia's. But hear me. You know the Prince worships me?"

"I know," he said. "Poor Featherhead, I cross his destiny!"

"Well now," she continued, "what if I bring him alone out of the palace, to some quiet corner of the Park—the Flying Mercury, for instance? Gordon can be posted in the thicket; the carriage wait behind the temple; not a cry, not a scuffle, not a footfall; simply, the Prince vanishes!—What do you say? Am I an able ally? Are my *beaux yeux* of service? Ah, Heinrich, do not lose your Anna!—she has power!"

He struck with his open hand upon the chimney. "Witch!" he said, "there is not your

match for devilry in Europe. Service! the thing runs on wheels."

"Kiss me, then, and let me go. I must not miss my Featherhead," she said.

"Stay, stay," said the Baron; "not so fast. I wish, upon my soul, that I could trust you; but you are, out and in, so whimsical a devil that I dare not. Hang it, Anna, no; it's not possible!"

"You doubt me, Heinrich?" she cried.

"Doubt is not the word," said he. "I know you. Once you were clear of me with that paper in your pocket, who knows what you would do with it?—not you, at least—nor I. You see," he added, shaking his head paternally upon the Countess, "you are as vicious as a monkey."

"I swear to you," she cried, "by my salvation. . . ."

"I have no curiosity to hear you swearing," said the Baron.

"You think that I have no religion? You suppose me destitute of honour. Well," she said, "see here: I will not argue, but I tell you once for all: leave me this order, and the Prince shall be arrested—take it from me, and, as certain as I speak, I will upset the coach. Trust me, or fear me: take your choice." And she offered him the paper.

The Baron, in a great contention of mind, stood irresolute, weighing the two dangers. Once

his hand advanced, then dropped. "Well," he said, "since trust is what you call it . . . . ."

"No more," she interrupted. "Do not spoil your attitude. And now since you have behaved like a good sort of fellow in the dark, I will condescend to tell you why. I go to the palace to arrange with Gordon; but how is Gordon to obey me? And how can I foresee the hours? It may be midnight; ay, and it may be nightfall; all's a chance; and to act, I must be free and hold the strings of the adventure. And now," she cried, "your Vivien goes. Dub me your knight!" And she held out her arms and smiled upon him radiant.

"Well," he said, when he had kissed her, "every man must have his folly; I thank God mine is no worse. Off with you! I have given a child a squib."

CHAPTER XII

PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE SECOND: SHE INFORMS THE PRINCE

IT was the first impulse of Madame von Rosen to return to her own villa and revise her toilette. Whatever else should come of this adventure, it was her firm design to pay a visit to the Princess. And before that woman, so little beloved, the Countess would appear at no disadvantage. It was the work of minutes. Von Rosen had the captain's eye in matters of the toilette; she was none of those who hang in Fabian helplessness among their finery and, after hours, come forth upon the world as dowdies. A glance, a loosened curl, a studied and admired disorder in the hair, a bit of lace, a touch of colour, a yellow rose in the bosom; and the instant picture was complete.

"That will do," she said. "Bid my carriage follow me to the palace. In half an hour it should be there in waiting."

The night was beginning to fall and the shops to shine with lamps along the tree-beshadowed thoroughfares of Otto's capital, when the Coun-

tess started on her high emprise. She was jocund at heart; pleasure and interest had winged her beauty, and she knew it. She paused before the glowing jeweller's; she remarked and praised a costume in the milliner's window; and when she reached the lime-tree walk, with its high, umbrageous arches and stir of passers-by in the dim alleys, she took her place upon a bench and began to dally with the pleasures of the hour. It was cold, but she did not feel it, being warm within; her thoughts, in that dark corner, shone like the gold and rubies at the jeweller's; her ears, which heard the brushing of so many footfalls, transposed it into music.

What was she to do? She held the paper by which all depended. Otto and Gondremark and Ratafia, and the state itself, hung light in her balances, as light as dust; her little finger laid in either scale would set all flying: and she hugged herself upon her huge preponderance, and then laughed aloud to think how giddily it might be used. The vertigo of omnipotence, the disease of Cæsars, shook her reason. "O the mad world!" she thought, and laughed aloud in exultation.

A child, finger in mouth, had paused a little way from where she sat, and stared with cloudy interest upon this laughing lady. She called it nearer; but the child hung back. Instantly, with that curious passion which you may see any woman in the world display, on the most odd

occasions, for a similar end, the Countess bent herself with singleness of mind to overcome this diffidence; and presently, sure enough, the child was seated upon her knee, thumbing and glowering at her watch.

"If you had a clay bear and a china monkey," asked von Rosen, "which would you prefer to break?"

"But I have neither," said the child.

"Well," she said, "here is a bright florin, with which you may purchase both the one and the other; and I shall give it you at once, if you will answer my question. The clay bear or the china monkey—come?"

But the unbreeched soothsayer only stared upon the florin with big eyes; the oracle could not be persuaded to reply; and the Countess kissed him lightly, gave him the florin, set him down upon the path, and resumed her way with swinging and elastic gait.

"Which shall I break?" she wondered; and she passed her hand with delight among the careful disarrangement of her locks. "Which?" and she consulted heaven with her bright eyes. "Do I love both or neither? A little—passionately—not at all? Both or neither—both, I believe; but at least I will make hay of Ratafia."

By the time she had passed the iron gates, mounted the drive, and set her foot upon the broad flagged terrace, the night had come completely; the palace front was thick with lighted

windows; and along the balustrade, the lamp on every twentieth baluster shone clear. A few withered tracks of sunset, amber and glow-worm green, still lingered in the western sky; and she paused once again to watch them fading.

"And to think," she said, "that here am I—destiny embodied, a norn, a fate, a providence—and have no guess upon which side I shall declare myself! What other woman in my place would not be prejudiced, and think herself committed? But, thank Heaven! I was born just!" Otto's windows were bright among the rest, and she looked on them with rising tenderness. "How does it feel to be deserted?" she thought. "Poor dear fool! The girl deserves that he should see his order."

Without more delay, she passed into the palace and asked for an audience of Prince Otto. The Prince, she was told, was in his own apartment, and desired to be private. She sent her name. A man presently returned with word that the Prince tendered his apologies, but could see no one. "Then I will write," she said, and scribbled a few lines alleging urgency of life and death. "Help me, my Prince," she added; "none but you can help me." This time the messenger returned more speedily and begged the Countess to follow him: the Prince was graciously pleased to receive the Frau Gräfin von Rosen.

Otto sat by the fire in his large armoury,

weapons faintly glittering all about him in the changeful light. His face was disfigured by the marks of weeping; he looked sour and sad; nor did he rise to greet his visitor, but bowed, and bade the man begone. That kind of general tenderness which served the Countess for both heart and conscience, sharply smote her at this spectacle of grief and weakness; she began immediately to enter into the spirit of her part; and as soon as they were alone, taking one step forward and with a magnificent gesture—"Up!" she cried.

"Madame von Rosen," replied Otto dully, "you have used strong words. You speak of life and death. Pray, madam, who is threatened? Who is there," he added bitterly, "so destitute that even Otto of Grünewald can assist him?"

"First learn," said she, "the names of the conspirators: the Princess and the Baron Gondremark. Can you not guess the rest?" And then as he maintained his silence—"You!" she cried, pointing at him with her finger. "'Tis you they threaten! Your rascal and mine have laid their heads together and condemned you. But they reckoned without you and me. We make a *partie carrée*, Prince, in love and politics. They lead an ace, but we shall trump it. Come, partner, shall I draw my card?"

"Madam," he said, "explain yourself. Indeed I fail to comprehend."

"See, then," said she; and handed him the order.

He took it, looked upon it with a start; and then, still without speech, he put his hand before his face. She waited for a word in vain.

"What!" she cried, "do you take the thing downheartedly? As well seek wine in a milk-pail as love in that girl's heart! Be done with this, and be a man. After the league of the lions, let us have a conspiracy of mice, and pull this piece of machinery to ground. You were brisk enough last night when nothing was at stake and all was frolic. Well, here is better sport; here is life indeed."

He got to his feet with some alacrity, and his face, which was a little flushed, bore the marks of resolution.

"Madame von Rosen," said he, "I am neither unconscious nor ungrateful; this is the true continuation of your friendship; but I see that I must disappoint your expectations. You seem to expect from me some effort of resistance; but why should I resist? I have not much to gain; and now that I have read this paper, and the last of a fool's paradise is shattered, it would be hyperbolical to speak of loss in the same breath with Otto of Grünewald. I have no party; no policy; no pride, nor anything to be proud of. For what benefit or principle under Heaven do you expect me to contend? Or would you have me bite and scratch like a trapped weasel? No,

madam; signify to those who sent you my readiness to go. I would at least avoid a scandal."

"You go?—of your own will, you go?" she cried.

"I cannot say so much, perhaps," he answered; "but I go with good alacrity. I have desired a change some time; behold one offered me! Shall I refuse? Thank God, I am not so destitute of humour as to make a tragedy of such a farce." He flicked the order on the table. "You may signify my readiness," he added, grandly.

"Ah," she said, "you are more angry than you own."

"I, madam? angry?" he cried. "You rave. I have no cause for anger. In every way I have been taught my weakness, my instability, and my unfitness for the world. I am a plexus of weaknesses, an impotent Prince, a doubtful gentleman; and you yourself, indulgent as you are, have twice reproved my levity. And shall I be angry? I may feel the unkindness, but I have sufficient honesty of mind to see the reasons of this *coup d'état*."

"From whom have you got this?" she cried in wonder. "You think you have not behaved well? My Prince, were you not young and handsome, I should detest you for your virtues. You push them to the verge of commonplace. And this ingratitude——"

"Understand me, Madame von Rosen," returned the Prince, flushing a little darker, "there

can be here no talk of gratitude, none of pride. You are here, by what circumstance I know not, but doubtless led by your kindness, mixed up in what regards my family alone. You have no knowledge what my wife, your sovereign, may have suffered; it is not for you—no, nor for me—to judge. I own myself in fault; and were it otherwise, a man were a very empty boaster who should talk of love and start before a small humiliation. It is in all the copybooks that one should die to please his lady-love; and shall a man not go to prison?"

"Love? And what has love to do with being sent to gaol?" exclaimed the Countess, appealing to the walls and roof. "Heaven knows I think as much of love as any one; my life would prove it; but I admit no love, at least for a man, that is not equally returned. The rest is moonshine."

"I think of love more absolutely, madam, though I am certain no more tenderly, than a lady to whom I am indebted for such kindnesses," returned the Prince. "But this is unavailing. We are not here to hold a court of troubadours."

"Still," she replied, "there is one thing you forget. If she conspires with Gondremark against your liberty, she may conspire with him against your honour also."

"My honour?" he repeated. "For a woman, you surprise me. If I have failed to gain her

love or play my part of husband, what right is left me? or what honour can remain in such a scene of defeat? No honour that I recognise. I am become a stranger. If my wife no longer loves me, I will go to prison, since she wills it; if she love another, where should I be more in place? or whose fault is it but mine? You speak, Madame von Rosen, like too many women, with a man's tongue. Had I myself fallen into temptation (as, Heaven knows, I might) I should have trembled, but still hoped and asked for her forgiveness; and yet mine had been a treason in the teeth of love. But let me tell you, madam," he pursued, with rising irritation, "where a husband by futility, facility, and ill-timed humours has outwearied his wife's patience, I will suffer neither man nor woman to misjudge her. She is free; the man has been found wanting."

"Because she loves you not?" the Countess cried. "You know she is incapable of such a feeling."

"Rather, it was I who was born incapable of inspiring it," said Otto.

Madame von Rosen broke into sudden laughter. "Fool," she cried, "I am in love with you myself."

"Ah, madam, you are most compassionate," the Prince retorted, smiling. "But this is waste debate. I know my purpose. Perhaps, to equal you in frankness, I know and embrace my

advantage. I am not without the spirit of adventure. I am in a false position—so recognised by public acclamation: do you grudge me, then, my issue?"

"If your mind is made up, why should I dissuade you?" said the Countess. "I own, with a bare face, I am the gainer. Go, you take my heart with you, or more of it than I desire; I shall not sleep at night for thinking of your misery. But do not be afraid; I would not spoil you, you are such a fool and hero."

"Alas! madam," cried the Prince, "and your unlucky money! I did amiss to take it, but you are a wonderful persuader. And I thank God, I can still offer you the fair equivalent." He took some papers from the chimney. "Here, madam, are the title-deeds," he said; "where I am going, they can certainly be of no use to me, and I have now no other hope of making up to you your kindness. You made the loan without formality, obeying your kind heart. The parts are somewhat changed; the sun of this Prince of Grünewald is upon the point of setting; and I know you better than to doubt you will once more waive ceremony, and accept the best that he can give you. If I may look for any pleasure in the coming time, it will be to remember that the peasant is secure, and my most generous friend no loser."

"Do you not understand my odious position?" cried the Countess. "Dear Prince, it is upon your fall that I begin my fortune."

"It was the more like you to tempt me to resistance," returned Otto. "But this cannot alter our relations; and I must, for the last time, lay my commands upon you in the character of Prince." And with his loftiest dignity, he forced the deeds on her acceptance.

"I hate the very touch of them," she cried.

There followed upon this a little silence. "At what time," resumed Otto, "(if indeed you know) am I to be arrested?"

"Your Highness, when you please!" exclaimed the Countess. "Or if you choose to tear that paper, never!"

"I would rather it were done quickly," said the Prince. "I shall take but time to leave a letter for the Princess."

"Well," said the Countess, "I have advised you to resist; at the same time, if you intend to be dumb before your shearers, I must say that I ought to set about arranging your arrest. I offered"—she hesitated—"I offered to manage it, intending, my dear friend—intending, upon my soul, to be of use to you. Well, if you will not profit by my good will, then be of use to me; and as soon as ever you feel ready, go to the Flying Mercury where we met last night. It will be none the worse for you; and to make it quite plain, it will be better for the rest of us."

"Dear madam, certainly," said Otto. "If I am prepared for the chief evil, I shall not quarrel with details. Go, then, with my best gratitude;

and when I have written a few lines of leave-taking, I shall immediately hasten to keep tryst. To-night, I shall not meet so dangerous a cavalier," he added, with a smiling gallantry.

As soon as Madame von Rosen was gone, he made a great call upon his self-command. He was face to face with a miserable passage where, if it were possible, he desired to carry himself with dignity. As to the main fact, he never swerved or faltered; he had come so heartsick and so cruelly humiliated from his talk with Gotthold, that he embraced the notion of imprisonment with something bordering on relief. Here was, at least, a step which he thought blameless; here was a way out of his troubles. He sat down to write to Seraphina; and his anger blazed. The tale of his forbearances mounted, in his eyes, to something monstrous; still more monstrous, the coldness, egoism, and cruelty that had required and thus requited them. The pen which he had taken shook in his hand. He was amazed to find his resignation fled, but it was gone beyond his recall. In a few white-hot words, he bade adieu, dubbing desperation by the name of love, and calling his wrath forgiveness; then he cast but one look of leave-taking on the place that had been his for so long and was now to be his no longer; and hurried forth—love's prisoner—or pride's.

He took that private passage which he had trodden so often in less momentous hours. The

porter let him out; and the bountiful, cold air of the night and the pure glory of the stars received him on the threshold. He looked round him, breathing deep of earth's plain fragrance; he looked up into the great array of heaven, and was quieted. His little turgid life dwindled to its true proportions; and he saw himself (that great flame-hearted martyr!) stand like a speck under the cool cupola of the night. Thus he felt his careless injuries already soothed; the live air of out-of-doors, the quiet of the world, as if by their silent music, sobering and dwarfing his emotions.

"Well, I forgive her," he said. "If it be of any use to her, I forgive."

And with brisk steps, he crossed the garden, issued upon the park and came to the Flying Mercury. A dark figure moved forward from the shadow of the pedestal.

"I have to ask your pardon, sir," a voice observed, "but if I am right in taking you for the Prince, I was given to understand that you would be prepared to meet me."

"Herr Gordon, I believe?" said Otto.

"Herr Oberst Gordon," replied that officer. "This is rather a ticklish business for a man to be embarked in; and to find that all is to go pleasantly, is a great relief to me. The carriage is at hand; shall I have the honour of following your Highness?"

"Colonel," said the Prince, "I have now come

to that happy moment of my life, when I have orders to receive but none to give."

"A most philosophical remark!" returned the Colonel. "Begad, a very pertinent remark! it might be Plutarch. I am not a drop's blood to your Highness, or indeed to any one in this principality; or else I should dislike my orders. But as it is, and since there is nothing unnatural or unbecoming on my side, and your Highness takes it in good part, I begin to believe we may have a capital time together, sir—a capital time. For a gaoler is only a fellow-captive."

"May I inquire, Herr Gordon," asked Otto, "what led you to accept this dangerous and I would fain hope thankless office?"

"Very natural, I am sure," replied the officer of fortune. "My pay is, in the meanwhile, doubled."

"Well, sir, I will not presume to criticise," returned the Prince. "And I perceive the carriage."

Sure enough, at the intersection of two alleys of the park, a coach and four, conspicuous by its lanterns, stood in waiting. And a little way off about a score of lancers were drawn up under the shadow of the trees.

CHAPTER XIII

PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE THIRD: SHE ENLIGHTENS SERAPHINA

WHEN Madame von Rosen left the Prince, she hurried straight to Colonel Gordon; and not content with directing the arrangements, she had herself accompanied the soldier of fortune to the Flying Mercury. The Colonel gave her his arm, and the talk between this pair of conspirators ran high and lively. The Countess, indeed, was in a whirl of pleasure and excitement; her tongue stumbled upon laughter, her eyes shone, the colour that was usually wanting now perfected her face. It would have taken little more to bring Gordon to her feet—or so, at least, she believed, disdaining the idea.

Hidden among some lilac bushes, she enjoyed the great decorum of the arrest, and heard the dialogue of the two men die away along the path. Soon after, the rolling of a carriage and the beat of hoofs arose in the still air of the night, and passed speedily farther and fainter into silence. The Prince was gone.

Madame von Rosen consulted her watch. She

had still, she thought, time enough for the tit-bit of her evening; and hurrying to the palace, winged by the fear of Gondremark's arrival, she sent her name and a pressing request for a reception to the Princess Seraphina. As the Countess von Rosen unqualified, she was sure to be refused; but as an emissary of the Baron's, for so she chose to style herself, she gained immediate entry.

The Princess sat alone at table, making a feint of dining. Her cheeks were mottled, her eyes heavy; she had neither slept nor eaten; even her dress had been neglected. In short, she was out of health, out of looks, out of heart, and hag-ridden by her conscience. The Countess drew a swift comparison, and shone brighter in beauty.

"You come, madam, *de la part de Monsieur le Baron*," drawled the Princess. "Be seated. What have you to say?"

"To say?" repeated Madame von Rosen. "O, much to say! Much to say, that I would rather not, and much to leave unsaid that I would rather say. For I am like St. Paul, your Highness, and always wish to do the things I should not. Well! to be categorical—that is the word? —I took the Prince your order. He could not credit his senses. 'Ah,' he cried, 'dear Madame von Rosen, it is not possible—it cannot be—I must hear it from your lips. My wife is a poor girl misled, she is only silly, she is not cruel.'

'*Mon Prince*,' said I, 'a girl—and therefore cruel; youth kills flies.'—He had such pain to understand it!"

"Madame von Rosen," said the Princess, in most steadfast tones, but with a rose of anger in her face, "who sent you here, and for what purpose? Tell your errand."

"O, madam, I believe you understand me very well," returned von Rosen. "I have not your philosophy. I wear my heart upon my sleeve, excuse the indecency! It is a very little one," she laughed, "and I so often change the sleeve!"

"Am I to understand the Prince has been arrested?" asked the Princess, rising.

"While you sat there dining!" cried the Countess, still nonchalantly seated.

"You have discharged your errand," was the reply; "I will not detain you."

"O no, madam," said the Countess, "with your permission, I have not yet done. I have borne much this evening in your service. I have suffered. I was made to suffer in your service." She unfolded her fan as she spoke. Quick as her pulses beat, the fan waved languidly. She betrayed her emotion only by the brightness of her eyes and face, and by the almost insolent triumph with which she looked down upon the Princess. There were old scores of rivalry between them in more than one field; so at least von Rosen felt; and now she was to have her hour of victory in them all.

"You are no servant, Madame von Rosen, of mine," said Seraphina.

"No, madam, indeed," returned the Countess; "but we both serve the same person, as you know—or if you do not, then I have the pleasure of informing you. Your conduct is so light—so light," she repeated, the fan wavering higher like a butterfly, "that perhaps you do not truly understand." The Countess rolled her fan together, laid it in her lap, and rose to a less languorous position. "Indeed," she continued, "I should be sorry to see any young woman in your situation. You began with every advantage—birth, a suitable marriage—quite pretty too—and see what you have come to! My poor girl, to think of it! But there is nothing that does so much harm," observed the Countess finely, "as giddiness of mind." And she once more unfurled the fan, and approvingly fanned herself.

"I will no longer permit you to forget yourself," cried Seraphina. "I think you are mad."

"Not mad," returned von Rosen. "Sane enough to know you dare not break with me tonight, and to profit by the knowledge. I left my poor, pretty Prince Charming crying his eyes out for a wooden doll. My heart is soft; I love my pretty Prince; you will never understand it, but I long to give my Prince his doll, dry his poor eyes, and send him off happy. O, you immature fool!" the Countess cried, rising to her feet, and pointing at the Princess the

closed fan that now began to tremble in her hand. "O wooden doll!" she cried, "have you a heart, or blood, or any nature? This is a man, child—a man who loves you. O, it will not happen twice! it is not common; beautiful and clever women look in vain for it. And you, you pitiful school-girl, tread this jewel underfoot! you, stupid with your vanity! Before you try to govern kingdoms, you should first be able to behave yourself at home; home is the woman's kingdom." She paused and laughed a little, strangely to hear and look upon. "I will tell you one of the things," she said, "that were to stay unspoken. Von Rosen is a better woman than you, my Princess, though you will never have the pain of understanding it; and when I took the Prince your order, and looked upon his face, my soul was melted—O, I am frank—here, within my arms, I offered him repose!" She advanced a step superbly as she spoke, with outstretched arms; and Seraphina shrank. "Do not be alarmed!" the Countess cried; "I am not offering that hermitage to you; in all the world there is but one who wants to, and him you have dismissed! 'If it will give her pleasure I should wear the martyr's crown,' he cried, 'I will embrace the thorns.' I tell you—I am quite frank—I put the order in his power and begged him to resist. You, who have betrayed your husband, may betray me to Gondremark; my Prince would betray no one. Understand it plainly,"

she cried, "'tis of his pure forbearance you sit there; he had the power—I gave it him—to change the parts; and he refused, and went to prison in your place."

The Princess spoke with some distress. "Your violence shocks me and pains me," she began, "but I cannot be angry with what at least does honour to the mistaken kindness of your heart: it was right for me to know this. I will condescend to tell you. It was with deep regret that I was driven to this step. I admire in many ways the Prince—I admit his amiability. It was our great misfortune, it was perhaps somewhat of my fault, that we were so unsuited to each other; but I have a regard, a sincere regard, for all his qualities. As a private person I should think as you do. It is difficult, I know, to make allowances for state considerations. I have only with deep reluctance obeyed the call of a superior duty; and so soon as I dare do it for the safety of the state, I promise you the Prince shall be released. Many in my situation would have resented your freedoms. I am not—" and she looked for a moment rather piteously upon the Countess—"I am not altogether so inhuman as you think."

"And you can put these troubles of the state," the Countess cried, "to weigh with a man's love?"

"Madame von Rosen, these troubles are affairs of life and death to many; to the Prince,

and perhaps even to yourself, among the number," replied the Princess, with dignity. "I have learned, madam, although still so young, in a hard school, that my own feelings must everywhere come last."

"O callow innocence!" exclaimed the other. "Is it possible you do not know, or do not suspect, the intrigue in which you move? I find it in my heart to pity you! We are both women after all—poor girl, poor girl!—and who is born a woman is born a fool. And though I hate all women—come, for the common folly, I forgive you. Your Highness"—she dropped a deep stage courtesy and resumed her fan—"I am going to insult you, to betray one who is called my lover, and if it pleases you to use the power I now put unreservedly into your hands, to ruin my dear self. O, what a French comedy! You betray, I betray, they betray. It is now my cue. The letter, yes. Behold the letter, madam, its seal unbroken as I found it by my bed this morning; for I was out of humour, and I get many, too many, of these favours. For your own sake, for the sake of my Prince Charming, for the sake of this great principality that sits so heavy on your conscience, open it and read!"

"Am I to understand," inquired the Princess, "that this letter in any way regards me?"

"You see I have not opened it," replied von Rosen; "but 'tis mine, and I beg you to experiment."

"I cannot look at it till you have," returned Seraphina, very seriously. "There may be matter there not meant for me to see; it is a private letter."

The Countess tore it open, glanced it through, and tossed it back; and the Princess, taking up the sheet, recognised the hand of Gondremark, and read with a sickening shock the following lines:—

"Dearest Anna, come at once. Ratafia has done the deed, her husband to be packed to prison. This puts the minx entirely in my power; *le tour est joué:* she will now go steady in harness, or I will know the reason why. Come.

HEINRICH."

"Command yourself, madam," said the Countess, watching with some alarm the white face of Seraphina. "It is in vain for you to fight with Gondremark: he has more strings than mere court favour, and could bring you down to-morrow with a word. I would not have betrayed him otherwise; but Heinrich is a man, and plays with all of you like marionettes. And now at least you see for what you sacrificed my Prince. Madam, will you take some wine? I have been cruel."

"Not cruel, madam—salutary," said Seraphina, with a phantom smile. "No, I thank you, I require no attentions. The first surprise

affected me: will you give me time a little? I must think."

She took her head between her hands, and contemplated for a while the hurricane confusion of her thoughts.

"This information reaches me," she said, "when I have need of it. I would not do as you have done, but yet I thank you. I have been much deceived in Baron Gondremark."

"O, madam, leave Gondremark, and think upon the Prince!" cried von Rosen.

"You speak once more as a private person," said the Princess; "nor do I blame you. But my own thoughts are more distracted. However, as I believe you are truly a friend to my—to the —as I believe," she said, "you are a friend to Otto, I shall put the order for his release into your hands this moment. Give me the ink-dish. There!" and she wrote hastily, steadying her arm upon the table, for she trembled like a reed. "Remember, madam," she resumed, handing her the order, "this must not be used nor spoken of at present; till I have seen the Baron, any hurried step—I lose myself in thinking. The suddenness has shaken me."

"I promise you I will not use it," said the Countess, "till you give me leave, although I wish the Prince could be informed of it, to comfort his poor heart. And, O, I had forgotten, he has left a letter. Suffer me, madam; I will

bring it you. This is the door, I think?" And she sought to open it.

"The bolt is pushed," said Seraphina, flushing.

"O! O!" cried the Countess.

A silence fell between them.

"I will get it for myself," said Seraphina; "and in the meanwhile I beg you to leave me. I thank you, I am sure, but I shall be obliged if you will leave me."

The Countess deeply curtseyed, and withdrew.

CHAPTER XIV

RELATES THE CAUSE AND OUTBREAK OF THE REVOLUTION

BRAVE as she was, and brave by intellect, the Princess, when first she was alone, clung to the table for support. The four corners of her universe had fallen. She had never liked nor trusted Gondremark completely; she had still held it possible to find him false to friendship; but from that to finding him devoid of all those public virtues for which she had honoured him, a mere commonplace intriguer, using her for his own ends, the step was wide and the descent giddy. Light and darkness succeeded each other in her brain; now she believed, and now she could not. She turned, blindly groping for the note. But von Rosen, who had not forgotten to take the warrant from the Prince, had remembered to recover her note from the Princess: von Rosen was an old campaigner whose most violent emotion aroused rather than clouded the vigour of her reason.

The thought recalled to Seraphina the remembrance of the other letter—Otto's. She rose and went speedily, her brain still wheeling,

and burst into the Prince's armoury. The old chamberlain was there in waiting; and the sight of another face, prying (or so she felt) on her distress, struck Seraphina into childish anger.

"Go!" she cried; and then, when the old man was already half-way to the door, "Stay!" she added. "As soon as Baron Gondremark arrives, let him attend me here."

"It shall be so directed," said the chamberlain.

"There was a letter . . ." she began, and paused.

"Her Highness," said the chamberlain, "will find a letter on the table. I had received no orders, or her Highness had been spared this trouble."

"No, no, no," she cried. "I thank you. I desire to be alone."

And then, when he was gone, she leaped upon the letter. Her mind was still obscured; like the moon upon a night of clouds and wind, her reason shone and was darkened; and she read the words by flashes.

"Seraphina [the Prince wrote], I will write no syllable of reproach. I have seen your order, and I go. What else is left me? I have wasted my love, and have no more. To say that I forgive you is not needful: at least, we are now separate for ever; by your own act, you free me from my willing bondage: I go free to prison. This is the last that you will

hear of me in love or anger. I have gone out of your life; you may breathe easy; you have now rid yourself of the husband who allowed you to desert him, of the Prince who gave you his rights, and of the married lover who made it his pride to defend you in your absence. How you have requited him, your own heart more loudly tells you than my words. There is a day coming when your vain dreams will roll away like clouds, and you will find yourself alone. Then you will remember

OTTO."

She read with a great horror on her mind; that day, of which he wrote, was come. She was alone; she had been false, she had been cruel; remorse rolled in upon her; and then with a more piercing note, vanity bounded on the stage of consciousness. She a dupe! she helpless! she to have betrayed herself in seeking to betray her husband! she to have lived these years upon flattery, grossly swallowing the bolus, like a clown with sharpers! she—Seraphina! Her swift mind drank the consequences; she foresaw the coming fall, her public shame; she saw the odium, disgrace, and folly of her story flaunt through Europe. She recalled the scandal she had so royally braved: and alas! she had now no courage to confront it with. To be thought the mistress of that man: perhaps for that . . . She closed her eyes on agonising vistas. Swift as thought she had snatched a bright dagger from the weapons that shone along the wall. Ay, she

would escape. From that world-wide theatre of nodding heads and buzzing whisperers, in which she now beheld herself unpitiably martyred, one door stood open. At any cost, through any stress of suffering, that greasy laughter should be stifled. She closed her eyes, breathed a wordless prayer, and pressed the weapon to her bosom.

At the astonishing sharpness of the prick, she gave a cry and awoke to a sense of undeserved escape. A little ruby spot of blood was the reward of that great act of desperation; but the pain had braced her like a tonic, and her whole design of suicide had passed away.

At the same instant regular feet drew near along the gallery, and she knew the tread of the big Baron, so often gladly welcome, and even now rallying her spirits like a call to battle. She concealed the dagger in the folds of her skirt; and drawing her stature up, she stood firm-footed, radiant with anger, waiting for the foe.

The Baron was announced, and entered. To him, Seraphina was a hated task: like the schoolboy with his Virgil, he had neither will nor leisure to remark her beauties; but when he now beheld her standing illuminated by her passion, new feelings flashed upon him, a frank admiration, a brief sparkle of desire. He noted both with joy; they were means. "If I have to play the lover," thought he, for that was his constant pre-occupation, "I believe I can put soul into it." Mean-

while, with his usual ponderous grace, he bent before the lady.

"I propose," she said in a strange voice, not known to her till then, "that we release the Prince and do not prosecute the war."

"Ah, madam," he replied, "'tis as I knew it would be! Your heart, I knew, would wound you when we came to this distasteful but most necessary step. Ah, madam, believe me, I am not unworthy to be your ally; I know you have qualities to which I am a stranger, and count them the best weapons in the armoury of our alliance:—the girl in the queen—pity, love, tenderness, laughter; the smile that can reward. I can only command; I am the frowner. But you! And you have the fortitude to command these comely weaknesses, to tread them down at the call of reason. How often have I not admired it even to yourself! Ay, even to yourself," he added, tenderly, dwelling, it seemed, in memory on hours of more private admiration. "But now, madam——"

"But now, Herr von Gondremark, the time for these declarations has gone by," she cried. "Are you true to me? are you false? Look in your heart and answer; it is your heart I want to know."

"It has come," thought Gondremark. "You, madam!" he cried, starting back—with fear, you would have said, and yet a timid joy. "You, yourself, you bid me look into my heart?"

"Do you suppose I fear?" she cried, and looked at him with such a heightened colour, such bright eyes, and a smile of so abstruse a meaning, that the Baron discarded his last doubt. "Ah, madam!" he cried, plumping on his knees. "Seraphina! Do you permit me? have you divined my secret? It is true—I put my life with joy into your power—I love you, love with ardour, as an equal, as a mistress, as a brother-in-arms, as an adored, desired, sweetheart woman. O Bride!" he cried, waxing dithyrambic, "bride of my reason and my senses, have pity, have pity on my love!"

She heard him with wonder, rage, and then contempt. His words offended her to sickness; his appearance, as he grovelled bulkily upon the floor, moved her to such laughter as we laugh in nightmares.

"O shame!" she cried. "Absurd and odious! What would the Countess say?"

That great Baron Gondremark the excellent politician, remained for some little time upon his knees in a frame of mind which perhaps we are allowed to pity. His vanity, within his iron bosom, bled and raved. If he could have blotted all, if he could have withdrawn part, if he had not called her bride—with a roaring in his ears, he thus regretfully reviewed his declaration. He got to his feet tottering; and then, in that first moment when a dumb agony finds a vent in words, and the tongue betrays the inmost

and worst of a man, he permitted himself a retort which, for six weeks to follow, he was to repent at leisure.

"Ah," said he, "the Countess? Now I perceive the reason of your Highness's disorder."

The lackey-like insolence of the words was driven home by a more insolent manner. There fell upon Seraphina one of those storm-clouds which had already blackened upon her reason; she heard herself cry out; and when the cloud dispersed, flung the blood-stained dagger on the floor, and saw Gondremark reeling back with open mouth and clapping his hand upon the wound. The next moment, with oaths that she had never heard, he leaped at her in savage passion; clutched her as she recoiled; and in the very act, stumbled and drooped. She had scarce time to fear his murderous onslaught ere he fell before her feet.

He rose upon one elbow; she still staring upon him, white with horror.

"Anna!" he cried, "Anna! Help!"

And then his utterance failed him, and he fell back, to all appearance dead.

Seraphina ran to and fro in the room; she wrung her hands and cried aloud; within she was all one uproar of terror, and conscious of no articulate wish but to awake.

There came a knocking at the door; and she sprang to it and held it, panting like a beast, and with the strength of madness in her arms, till

she had pushed the bolt. At this success a certain calm fell upon her reason. She went back and looked upon her victim, the knocking growing louder. O yes, he was dead. She had killed him. He had called upon von Rosen with his latest breath; ah! who would call on Seraphina? She had killed him. She, whose irresolute hand could scarce prick blood from her own bosom, had found strength to cast down that great colossus at a blow.

All this while the knocking was growing more uproarious and more unlike the staid career of life in such a palace. Scandal was at the door, with what a fatal following she dreaded to conceive; and at the same time among the voices that now began to summon her by name, she recognised the Chancellor's. He or another, somebody must be the first.

"Is Herr von Greisengesang without?" she called.

"Your Highness—yes!" the old gentleman answered. "We have heard cries, a fall. Is anything amiss?"

"Nothing," replied Seraphina. "I desire to speak with you. Send off the rest." She panted between each phrase; but her mind was clear. She let the looped curtain down upon both sides before she drew the bolt; and, thus secure from any sudden eyeshot from without, admitted the obsequious Chancellor and again made fast the door.

Greisengesang clumsily revolved among the wings of the curtain; so that she was clear of it as soon as he.

"My God!" he cried. "The Baron!"

"I have killed him," she said. "O, killed him!"

"Dear me," said the old gentleman, "this is most unprecedented. Lovers' quarrels," he added ruefully, "redintegratio ——" and then paused. "But, my dear madam," he broke out again, "in the name of all that is practical, what are we to do? This is exceedingly grave; morally, madam, it is appalling. I take the liberty, your Highness, for one moment, of addressing you as a daughter, a loved although respected daughter; and I must say that I cannot conceal from you that this is morally most questionable. And, O dear me, we have a dead body!"

She had watched him closely; hope fell to contempt; she drew away her skirts from his weakness, and, in the act, her own strength returned to her.

"See if he be dead," she said; not one word of explanation or defence; she had scorned to justify herself before so poor a creature: "See if he be dead" was all.

With the greatest compunction, the Chancellor drew near; and as he did so the wounded Baron rolled his eyes.

"He lives," cried the old courtier, turning effusively to Seraphina. "Madam, he still lives."

"Help him then," returned the Princess, standing fixed. "Bind up his wound."

"Madam, I have no means," protested the Chancellor.

"Can you not take your handkerchief, your neck-cloth, anything?" she cried; and at the same moment, from her light muslin gown she rent off a flounce and tossed it on the floor. "Take that," she said, and for the first time directly faced Greisengesang.

But the Chancellor held up his hands and turned away his head in agony. The grasp of the falling Baron had torn down the dainty fabric of the bodice; and—"O Highness!" cried Greisengesang, appalled, "the terrible disorder of your toilette!"

"Take up that flounce," she said; "the man may die."

Greisengesang turned in a flutter to the Baron and attempted some innocent and bungling measures. "He still breathes," he kept saying. "All is not yet over; he is not yet gone."

"And now," said she, "if that is all you can do, begone and get some porters; he must instantly go home."

"Madam," cried the Chancellor, "if this most melancholy sight were seen in town—O dear, the State would fall!" he piped.

"There is a litter in the Palace," she replied. "It is your part to see him safe. I lay commands upon you. On your life it stands."

"I see it, dear Highness," he jerked. "Clearly I see it. But how? what men? The Prince's servants—yes. They had a personal affection. They will be true, if any."

"O, not them!" she cried. "Take Sabra, my own man."

"Sabra! The grand-mason?" returned the Chancellor, aghast. "If he but saw this, he would sound the tocsin—we should all be butchered."

She measured the depth of her abasement steadily. "Take whom you must," she said, "and bring the litter here."

Once she was alone she ran to the Baron, and with a sickening heart sought to allay the flux of blood. The touch of the skin of that great charlatan revolted her to the toes; the wound, in her ignorant eyes, looked deathly; yet she contended with her shuddering, and, with more skill at least than the Chancellor's, staunched the welling injury. An eye unprejudiced with hate would have admired the Baron in his swoon; he looked so great and shapely; it was so powerful a machine that lay arrested; and his features, cleared for the moment both of temper and dissimulation, were seen to be so purely modelled. But it was not thus with Seraphina. Her victim, as he lay outspread, twitching a little, his big chest unbared, fixed her with his ugliness; and her mind flitted for a glimpse to Otto.

Rumours began to sound about the palace of feet running and of voices raised; the echoes of the great arched staircase were voluble of some confusion; and then the gallery jarred with a quick and heavy tramp. It was the Chancellor, followed by four of Otto's valets and a litter. The servants, when they were admitted, stared at the dishevelled Princess and the wounded man; speech was denied them, but their thoughts were riddled with profanity. Gondremark was bundled in; the curtains of the litter were lowered; the bearers carried it forth, and the Chancellor followed behind with a white face.

Seraphina ran to the window. Pressing her face upon the pane, she could see the terrace, where the lights contended; thence, the avenue of lamps that joined the Palace and town; and overhead the hollow night and the larger stars. Presently the small procession issued from the Palace, crossed the parade, and began to thread the glittering alley: the swinging couch with its four porters, the much-pondering Chancellor behind. She watched them dwindle with strange thoughts: her eyes fixed upon the scene, her mind still glancing right and left on the overthrow of her life and hopes. There was no one left in whom she might confide; none whose hand was friendly, or on whom she dared to reckon for the barest loyalty. With the fall of Gondremark her party, her brief popularity, had fallen. So she sat crouched upon the win-

dow-seat, her brow to the cool pane; her dress in tatters, barely shielding her; her mind revolving bitter thoughts.

Meanwhile, consequences were fast mounting; and in the deceptive quiet of the night, downfall and red revolt were brewing. The litter had passed forth between the iron gates and entered on the streets of the town. By what flying panic, by what thrill of air communicated, who shall say? but the passing bustle in the Palace had already reached and re-echoed in the region of the burghers. Rumour, with her loud whisper, hissed about the town; men left their homes without knowing why: knots formed along the boulevard; under the rare lamps and the great limes the crowd grew blacker.

And now through the midst of that expectant company, the unusual sight of a closed litter was observed approaching, and trotting hard behind it that great dignitary Cancellarius Greisengesang. Silence looked on as it went by; and as soon as it was passed, the whispering seethed over like a boiling pot. The knots were sundered; and gradually, one following another, the whole mob began to form into a procession and escort the curtained litter. Soon spokesmen, a little bolder than their mates, began to ply the Chancellor with questions. Never had he more need of that great art of falsehood, by whose exercise he had so richly lived. And yet now he stumbled, the master

passion, fear, betraying him. He was pressed; he became incoherent; and then from the jolting litter came a groan. In the instant hubbub and the gathering of the crowd as to a natural signal, the clear-eyed quavering Chancellor heard the catch of the clock before it strikes the hour of doom; and for ten seconds he forgot himself. This shall atone for many sins. He plucked a bearer by the sleeve. "Bid the Princess flee. All is lost," he whispered. And the next moment he was babbling for his life among the multitude.

Five minutes later the wild-eyed servant burst into the armoury. "All is lost!" he cried. "The Chancellor bids you flee." And at the same time, looking through the window, Seraphina saw the black rush of the populace begin to invade the lamplit avenue.

"Thank you, Georg," she said. "I thank you. Go." And as the man still lingered, "I bid you go," she added. "Save yourself."

Down by the private passage, and just some two hours later, Amalia Seraphina, the last Princess, followed Otto Johann Friedrich, the last Prince of Grünewald.

BOOK III

FORTUNATE MISFORTUNE

CHAPTER I

PRINCESS CINDERELLA

THE porter, drawn by the growing turmoil, had vanished from the postern, and the door stood open on the darkness of the night. As Seraphina fled up the terraces, the cries and loud footing of the mob drew nearer the doomed palace; the rush was like the rush of cavalry; the sound of shattering lamps tingled above the rest; and overtowering all, she heard her own name bandied among the shouters. A bugle sounded at the door of the guard-room; one gun was fired; and then, with the yell of hundreds, Mittwalden Palace was carried at a rush.

Sped by these dire sounds and voices, the Princess scaled the long garden, skimming like a bird the starlit stairways; crossed the Park, which was in that place narrow; and plunged upon the farther side into the rude shelter of the forest. So, at a bound, she left the discretion and the cheerful lamps of Palace evenings; ceased utterly to be a sovereign lady; and, falling from the whole height of civilisation, ran forth into the woods, a ragged Cinderella.

She went direct before her through an open tract of the forest, full of brush and birches, and where the starlight guided her; and beyond that again, must thread the columned blackness of a pine grove joining overhead the thatch of its long branches. At that hour, the place was breathless; a horror of night like a presence occupied that dungeon of the wood; and she went groping, knocking against the boles—her ear, betweenwhiles, strained to aching and yet unrewarded.

But the slope of the ground was upward, and encouraged her; and presently she issued on a rocky hill that stood forth above the sea of forest. All around were other hilltops, big and little; sable vales of forest between; overhead the open heaven and the brilliancy of countless stars; and along the western sky the dim forms of mountains. The glory of the great night laid hold upon her; her eyes shone with stars; she dipped her sight into the coolness and brightness of the sky, as she might have dipped her wrist into a spring; and her heart, at that ethereal shock, began to move more soberly. The sun that sails overhead, ploughing into gold the fields of daylight azure and uttering the signal to man's myriads, has no word apart from man the individual; and the moon, like a violin, only praises and laments our private destiny. The stars alone, cheerful whisperers, confer quietly with each of us like friends; they give ear to our sorrows smilingly, like wise

old men, rich in tolerance; and by their double scale, so small to the eye, so vast to the imagination, they keep before the mind the double character of man's nature and fate.

There sate the Princess, beautifully looking upon beauty, in council with these glad advisers. Bright like pictures, clear like a voice in the porches of her ear, memory re-enacted the tumult of the evening: the Countess and the dancing fan, the big Baron on his knees, the blood on the polished floor, the knocking, the swing of the litter down the avenue of lamps, the messenger, the cries of the charging mob; and yet all were far away and phantasmal, and she was still healingly conscious of the peace and glory of the night. She looked towards Mittwalden; and above the hill-top, which already hid it from her view, a throbbing redness hinted of fire. Better so: better so, that she should fall with tragic greatness, lit by a blazing palace! She felt not a trace of pity for Gondremark or of concern for Grünewald: that period of her life was closed for ever, a wrench of wounded vanity alone surviving. She had but one clear idea: to flee;—and another, obscure and half-rejected, although still obeyed: to flee in the direction of the Felsenburg. She had a duty to perform, she must free Otto—so her mind said, very coldly; but her heart embraced the notion of that duty even with ardour, and her hands began to yearn for the grasp of kindness.

She rose, with a start of recollection, and plunged down the slope into the covert. The woods received and closed upon her. Once more, she wandered and hasted in a blot, uncheered, unpiloted. Here and there, indeed, through rents in the wood-roof, a glimmer attracted her; here and there, a tree stood out among its neighbours by some force of outline; here and there, a brushing among the leaves, a notable blackness, a dim shine, relieved, only to exaggerate, the solid oppression of the night and silence. And between whiles, the unfeatured darkness would redouble and the whole ear of night appear to be gloating on her steps. Now she would stand still, and the silence would grow and grow, as it weighed upon her breathing; and then she would address herself again to run, stumbling, falling, and still hurrying the more. And presently the whole wood rocked and began to run along with her. The noise of her own mad passage through the silence spread and echoed, and filled the night with terror. Panic hunted her: Panic from the trees reached forth with clutching branches; the darkness was lit up and peopled with strange forms and faces. She strangled and fled before her fears. And yet in the last fortress, reason, blown upon by these gusts of terror, still shone with a troubled light. She knew, yet could not act upon her knowledge; she knew that she must stop, and yet she still ran.

She was already near madness, when she broke suddenly into a narrow clearing. At the same time the din grew louder, and she became conscious of vague forms and fields of whiteness. And with that the earth gave way; she fell and found her feet again with an incredible shock to her senses, and her mind was swallowed up.

When she came again to herself, she was standing to the mid-leg in an icy eddy of a brook, and leaning with one hand on the rock from which it poured. The spray had wet her hair. She saw the white cascade, the stars wavering in the shaken pool, foam flitting, and high overhead the tall pines on either hand serenely drinking starshine; and in the sudden quiet of her spirit, she heard with joy the firm plunge of the cataract in the pool. She scrambled forth dripping. In the face of her proved weakness, to adventure again upon the horror of blackness in the groves were a suicide of life or reason. But here, in the alley of the brook, with the kind stars above her, and the moon presently swimming into sight, she could await the coming of day without alarm.

This lane of pine-trees ran very rapidly down hill and wound among the woods; but it was a wider thoroughfare than the brook needed, and here and there were little dimpling lawns and coves of the forest, where the starshine slumbered. Such a lawn she paced, taking patience

bravely; and now she looked up the hill and saw the brook coming down to her in a series of cascades; and now approached the margin, where it welled among the rushes silently; and now gazed at the great company of heaven with an enduring wonder. The early evening had fallen chill, but the night was now temperate; out of the recesses of the wood there came mild airs as from a deep and peaceful breathing; and the dew was heavy on the grass and the tight-shut daisies. This was the girl's first night under the naked heaven; and now that her fears were overpast, she was touched to the soul by its serene amenity and peace. Kindly the host of heaven blinked down upon that wandering Princess; and the honest brook had no words but to encourage her.

At last she began to be aware of a wonderful revolution, compared to which the fire of Mittwalden Palace was but the crack and flash of a percussion-cap. The countenance with which the pines regarded her began insensibly to change; the grass too, short as it was, and the whole winding staircase of the brook's course, began to wear a solemn freshness of appearance. And this slow transfiguration reached her heart, and played upon it, and transpierced it with a serious thrill. She looked all about; the whole face of nature looked back, brimful of meaning, finger on lip, leaking its glad secret. She looked up. Heaven was almost emptied of stars.

Such as still lingered shone with a changed and waning brightness, and began to faint in their stations. And the colour of the sky itself was the most wonderful; for the rich blue of the night had now melted and softened and brightened; and there had succeeded in its place a hue that has no name, and that is never seen but as the herald of morning. "O!" she cried, joy catching at her voice, "O! it is the dawn!"

In a breath she passed over the brook, and looped up her skirts and fairly ran in the dim alleys. As she ran, her ears were aware of many pipings, more beautiful than music; in the small dish-shaped houses in the fork of giant arms, where they had lain all night, lover by lover, warmly pressed, the bright-eyed, big-hearted singers began to awaken for the day. Her heart melted and flowed forth to them in kindness. And they, from their small and high perches in the clerestories of the wood cathedral, peered down sidelong at the ragged Princess as she flitted below them on the carpet of the moss and tassel.

Soon she had struggled to a certain hill-top, and saw far before her the silent inflooding of the day. Out of the East it welled and whitened; the darkness trembled into light; and the stars were extinguished like the street-lamps of a human city. The whiteness brightened into silver, the silver warmed into gold, the gold

kindled into pure and living fire; and the face of the East was barred with elemental scarlet. The day drew its first long breath, steady and chill; and for leagues around the woods sighed and shivered. And then, at one bound, the sun had floated up; and her startled eyes received day's first arrow, and quailed under the buffet. On every side, the shadows leaped from their ambush and fell prone. The day was come, plain and garish; and up the steep and solitary eastern heaven, the sun, victorious over his competitors, continued slowly and royally to mount.

Seraphina drooped for a little, leaning on a pine, the shrill joy of the woodlands mocking her. The shelter of the night, the thrilling and joyous changes of the dawn, were over; and now, in the hot eye of the day, she turned uneasily and looked sighingly about her. Some way off among the lower woods, a pillar of smoke was mounting and melting in the gold and blue. There, surely enough, were human folk, the hearth-surrounders. Man's fingers had laid the twigs; it was man's breath that had quickened and encouraged the baby flames; and now, as the fire caught, it would be playing ruddily on the face of its creator. At the thought, she felt a-cold and little and lost in that great out-of-doors. The electric shock of the young sunbeams and the unhuman beauty of the woods began to irk and daunt her. The covert of the house, the decent privacy of rooms, the

swept and regulated fire, all that denotes or beautifies the home life of man, began to draw her as with cords. The pillar of smoke was now risen into some stream of moving air; it began to lean out sideways in a pennon; and thereupon, as though the change had been a summons, Seraphina plunged once more into the labyrinth of the wood.

She left day upon the high ground. In the lower groves there still lingered the blue early twilight and the seizing freshness of the dew. But here and there, above this field of shadow, the head of a great outspread pine was already glorious with day; and here and there, through the breaches of the hills, the sunbeams made a great and luminous entry. Here Seraphina hastened along forest paths. She had lost sight of the pilot smoke, which blew another way, and conducted herself in that great wilderness by the direction of the sun. But presently fresh signs bespoke the neighbourhood of man; felled trunks, white slivers from the axe, bundles of green boughs, and stacks of firewood. These guided her forward; until she came forth at last upon the clearing whence the smoke arose. A hut stood in the clear shadow, hard by a brook which made a series of inconsiderable falls; and on the threshold, the Princess saw a sunburnt and hard-featured woodman, standing with his hands behind his back and gazing skyward.

She went to him directly: a beautiful, bright-eyed, and haggard vision; splendidly arrayed and pitifully tattered; the diamond ear-drops still glittering in her ears; and with the movement of her coming, one small breast showing and hiding among the ragged covert of the laces. At that ambiguous hour, and coming as she did from the great silence of the forest, the man drew back from the Princess as from something elfin.

"I am cold," she said, "and weary. Let me rest beside your fire."

The woodman was visibly commoved, but answered nothing.

"I will pay," she said, and then repented of the words, catching perhaps a spark of terror from his frightened eyes. But, as usual, her courage rekindled brighter for the check. She put him from the door and entered; and he followed her in superstitious wonder.

Within, the hut was rough and dark; but on the stone that served as hearth, twigs and a few dry branches burned with the brisk sounds and all the variable beauty of fire. The very sight of it composed her; she crouched hard by on the earth floor and shivered in the glow, and looked upon the eating blaze with admiration. The woodman was still staring at his guest: at the wreck of the rich dress, the bare arms, the bedraggled laces and the gems. He found no word to utter.

"Give me food," said she,—"here, by the fire."

He set down a pitcher of coarse wine, bread, a piece of cheese, and a handful of raw onions. The bread was hard and sour, the cheese like leather; even the onion, which ranks with the truffle and the nectarine in the chief place of honour of earth's fruits, is not perhaps a dish for princesses when raw. But she ate, if not with appetite, with courage; and when she had eaten, did not disdain the pitcher. In all her life before, she had not tasted of gross food nor drunk after another; but a brave woman far more readily accepts a change of circumstances than the bravest man. All that while, the woodman continued to observe her furtively, many low thoughts of fear and greed contending in his eyes. She read them clearly, and she knew she must be gone.

Presently she arose and offered him a florin.

"Will that repay you?" she asked.

But here the man found his tongue. "I must have more than that," said he.

"It is all I have to give you," she returned, and passed him by serenely.

Yet her heart trembled, for she saw his hand stretched forth as if to arrest her, and his unsteady eyes wandering to his axe. A beaten path led westward from the clearing, and she swiftly followed it. She did not glance behind her. But as soon as the least turning of the

path had concealed her from the woodman's eyes, she slipped among the trees and ran till she deemed herself in safety.

By this time the strong sunshine pierced in a thousand places the pine-thatch of the forest, fired the red boles, irradiated the cool aisles of shadow, and burned in jewels on the grass. The gum of these trees was dearer to the senses than the gums of Araby; each pine, in the lusty morning sunlight, burned its own wood-incense; and now and then a breeze would rise and toss these rooted censers, and send shade and sun-gem flitting, swift as swallows, thick as bees; and wake a brushing bustle of sounds that murmured and went by.

On she passed, and up and down, in sun and shadow; now aloft on the bare ridge among the rocks and birches, with the lizards and the snakes; and anon in the deep grove among sunless pillars. Now she followed wandering wood-paths, in the maze of valleys; and again, from a hill-top, beheld the distant mountains and the great birds circling under the sky. She would see afar off a nestling hamlet, and go round to avoid it. Below, she traced the course of the foam of mountain torrents. Nearer hand, she saw where the tender springs welled up in silence, or oozed in green moss; or in the more favoured hollows a whole family of infant rivers would combine, and tinkle in the stones, and lie in pools to be a bathing-place for sparrows, or fall

from the sheer rock in rods of crystal. Upon all these things, as she still sped along in the bright air, she looked with a rapture of surprise and a joyful fainting of the heart; they seemed so novel, they touched so strangely home, they were so hued and scented, they were so beset and canopied by the dome of the blue air of heaven.

At length, when she was well weary, she came upon a wide and shallow pool. Stones stood in it, like islands; bulrushes fringed the coast; the floor was paved with the pine needles, and the pines themselves, whose roots made promontories, looked down silently on their green images. She crept to the margin and beheld herself with wonder, a hollow and bright-eyed phantom, in the ruins of her palace robe. The breeze now shook her image; now it would be marred with flies; and at that she smiled; and from the fading circles, her counterpart smiled back to her and looked kind. She sat long in the warm sun, and pitied her bare arms that were all bruised and marred with falling, and marvelled to see that she was dirty, and could not grow to believe that she had gone so long in such a strange disorder.

Then, with a sigh, she addressed herself to make a toilet by that forest mirror, washed herself pure from all the stains of her adventure, took off her jewels and wrapped them in her handkerchief, re-arranged the tatters of her

dress, and took down the folds of her hair. She shook it round her face, and the pool repeated her thus veiled. Her hair had smelt like violets, she remembered Otto saying; and so now she tried to smell it, and then shook her head, and laughed a little, sadly, to herself.

The laugh was returned upon her in a childish echo. She looked up; and lo! two children looking on,—a small girl and a yet smaller boy, standing, like playthings, by the pool, below a spreading pine. Seraphina was not fond of children, and now she was startled to the heart.

"Who are you!" she cried, hoarsely.

The mites huddled together and drew back; and Seraphina's heart reproached her that she should have frightened things so quaint and little, and yet alive with senses. She thought upon the birds and looked again at her two visitors; so little larger and so far more innocent. On their clear faces, as in a pool, she saw the reflection of their fears. With gracious purpose she arose.

"Come," she said, "do not be afraid of me," and took a step towards them.

But alas! at the first moment, the two poor babes in the wood turned and ran helter-skelter from the Princess.

The most desolate pang was struck into the girl's heart. Here she was, twenty-two—soon twenty-three—and not a creature loved her; none but Otto; and would even he forgive?

If she began weeping in these woods alone, it would mean death or madness. Hastily she trod the thoughts out like a burning paper; hastily rolled up her locks, and with terror dogging her, and her whole bosom sick with grief, resumed her journey.

Past ten in the forenoon, she struck a high-road, marching in that place uphill between two stately groves, a river of sunlight; and here, dead weary, careless of consequences, and taking some courage from the human and civilised neighbourhood of the road, she stretched herself on the green margin in the shadow of a tree. Sleep closed on her, at first with a horror of fainting, but when she ceased to struggle, kindly embracing her. So she was taken home for a little, from all her toils and sorrows, to her Father's arms. And there in the meanwhile her body lay exposed by the highwayside, in tattered finery; and on either hand from the woods the birds came flying by and calling upon others, and debated in their own tongue this strange appearance.

The sun pursued his journey; the shadow flitted from her feet, shrank higher and higher, and was upon the point of leaving her altogether, when the rumble of a coach was signalled to and fro by the birds. The road in that part was very steep; the rumble drew near with great deliberation; and ten minutes passed before a gentleman appeared, walking with a sober elderly

gait upon the grassy margin of the highway, and looking pleasantly around him as he walked. From time to time he paused, took out his note-book and made an entry with a pencil; and any spy who had been near enough would have heard him mumbling words as though he were a poet testing verses. The voice of the wheels was still faint, and it was plain the traveller had far outstripped his carriage.

He had drawn very near to where the Princess lay asleep, before his eye alighted on her; but when it did he started, pocketed his note-book, and approached. There was a mile-stone close to where she lay; and he sat down on that and coolly studied her. She lay upon one side, all curled and sunken, her brow on one bare arm, the other stretched out, limp and dimpled. Her young body, like a thing thrown down, had scarce a mark of life. Her breathing stirred her not. The deadliest fatigue was thus confessed in every language of the sleeping flesh. The traveller smiled grimly. As though he had looked upon a statue, he made a grudging inventory of her charms: the figure in that touching freedom of forgetfulness surprised him; the flush of slumber became her like a flower.

"Upon my word," he thought, "I did not think the girl could be so pretty. And to think," he added, "that I am under obligation not to use one word of this!"

He put forth his stick and touched her; and

at that she awoke, sat up with a cry, and looked upon him wildly.

"I trust your Highness has slept well," he said, nodding.

But she only uttered sounds.

"Compose yourself," said he, giving her certainly a brave example in his own demeanour. "My chaise is close at hand; and I shall have, I trust, the singular entertainment of abducting a sovereign Princess."

"Sir John!" she said, at last.

"At your Highness's disposal," he replied.

She sprang to her feet. "O," she cried, "have you come from Mittwalden?"

"This morning," he returned, "I left it; and if there is any one less likely to return to it than yourself, behold him!"

"The Baron——" she began, and paused.

"Madam," he answered, "it was well meant, and you are quite a Judith; but after the hours that have elapsed, you will probably be relieved to hear that he is fairly well. I took his news this morning ere I left. Doing fairly well, they said, but suffering acutely. Hey?—acutely. They could hear his groans in the next room."

"And the Prince," she asked, "is anything known of him?"

"It is reported," replied Sir John, with the same pleasurable deliberation, "that upon that point your Highness is the best authority."

"Sir John," she said eagerly, "you were gener-

ous enough to speak about your carriage. Will you, I beseech you, will you take me to the Felsenburg? I have business there of an extreme importance."

"I can refuse you nothing," replied the old gentleman, gravely and seriously enough. "Whatever, madam, it is in my power to do for you, that shall be done with pleasure. As soon as my chaise shall overtake us, it is yours to carry you where you will. But," added he, reverting to his former manner, "I observe you ask me nothing of the Palace."

"I do not care," she said. "I thought I saw it burning."

"Prodigious!" said the Baronet. "You thought? And can the loss of forty toilettes leave you cold? Well, madam, I admire your fortitude. And the state, too? As I left, the government was sitting,—the new government, of which at least two members must be known to you by name: Sabra, who had, I believe, the benefit of being formed in your employment—a footman,—am I right?—and our old friend the Chancellor, in something of a subaltern position. But in these convulsions, the last shall be first and the first last."

"Sir John," she said, with an air of perfect honesty, "I am sure you mean most kindly, but these matters have no interest for me."

The Baronet was so utterly discountenanced, that he hailed the appearance of his chaise with

welcome, and, by way of saying something, proposed that they should walk back to meet it. So it was done; and he helped her in with courtesy, mounted to her side, and from various receptacles (for the chaise was most completely fitted out) produced fruits and truffled liver, beautiful white bread, and a bottle of delicate wine. With these he served her like a father, coaxing and praising her to fresh exertions; and during all that time, as though silenced by the laws of hospitality, he was not guilty of the shadow of a sneer. Indeed his kindness seemed so genuine that Seraphina was moved to gratitude.

"Sir John," she said, "you hate me in your heart; why are you so kind to me?"

"Ah, my good lady," said he, with no disclaimer of the accusation, "I have the honour to be much your husband's friend, and somewhat his admirer."

"You!" she cried. "They told me you wrote cruelly of both of us."

"Such was the strange path by which we grew acquainted," said Sir John. "I had written, madam, with particular cruelty (since that shall be the phrase) of your fair self. Your husband set me at liberty, gave me a passport, ordered a carriage, and then, with the most boyish spirit, challenged me to fight. Knowing the nature of his married life, I thought the dash and loyalty he showed delightful. 'Do not be

afraid,' says he; 'if I am killed, there is nobody to miss me.' It appears you subsequently thought of that yourself. But I digress. I explained to him it was impossible that I could fight! 'Not if I strike you?' says he. Very droll; I wish I could have put it in my book. However, I was conquered, took the young gentleman to my high favour, and tore up my bits of scandal on the spot. That is one of the little favours, madam, that you owe your husband."

Seraphina sat for some while in silence. She could bear to be misjudged without a pang by those whom she contemned; she had none of Otto's eagerness to be approved, but went her own way straight and head in air. To Sir John, however, after what he had said, and as her husband's friend, she was prepared to stoop.

"What do you think of me?" she asked abruptly.

"I have told you already," said Sir John: "I think you want another glass of my good wine."

"Come," she said, "this is unlike you. You are not wont to be afraid. You say that you admire my husband: in his name, be honest."

"I admire your courage," said the Baronet. "Beyond that, as you have guessed, and indeed said, our natures are not sympathetic."

"You spoke of scandal," pursued Seraphina. "Was the scandal great?"

"It was considerable," said Sir John.

"And you believed it?" she demanded.

"O, madam," said Sir John, "the question!"

"Thank you for that answer!" cried Seraphina. "And now here, I will tell you, upon my honour, upon my soul, in spite of all the scandal in this world, I am as true a wife as ever stood."

"We should probably not agree upon a definition," observed Sir John.

"O!" she cried, "I have abominably used him—I know that; it is not that I mean. But if you admire my husband, I insist that you shall understand me: I can look him in the face without a blush."

"It may be, madam," said Sir John; "nor have I presumed to think the contrary."

"You will not believe me?" she cried. "You think I am a guilty wife? You think he was my lover?"

"Madam," returned the Baronet, "when I tore up my papers, I promised your good husband to concern myself no more with your affairs; and I assure you for the last time that I have no desire to judge you."

"But you will not acquit me! Ah!" she cried, "*he* will—he knows me better!"

Sir John smiled.

"You smile at my distress?" asked Seraphina.

"At your woman's coolness," said Sir John. "A man would scarce have had the courage of that cry, which was, for all that, very natural,

and I make no doubt quite true. But remark, madam—since you do me the honour to consult me gravely—I have no pity for what you call your distresses. You have been completely selfish, and now reap the consequence. Had you once thought of your husband, instead of singly thinking of yourself, you would not now have been alone, a fugitive, with blood upon your hands, and hearing from a morose old Englishman truth more bitter than scandal."

"I thank you," she said, quivering. "This is very true. Will you stop the carriage?"

"No, child," said Sir John, "not until I see you mistress of yourself."

There was a long pause, during which the carriage rolled by rock and woodland.

"And now," she resumed, with perfect steadiness, "will you consider me composed? I request you, as a gentleman, to let me out."

"I think you do unwisely," he replied. "Continue, if you please, to use my carriage."

"Sir John," she said, "if death were sitting on that pile of stones, I would alight! I do not blame, I thank you; I now know how I appear to others; but sooner than draw breath beside a man who can so think of me, I would—— O!" she cried, and was silent.

Sir John pulled the string, alighted, and offered her his hand; but she refused the help.

The road had now issued from the valleys in which it had been winding, and come to that

part of its course where it runs, like a cornice, along the brow of the steep northward face of Grünewald. The place where they had alighted was at a salient angle; a bold rock and some wind-tortured pine-trees overhung it from above; far below the blue plains lay forth and melted into heaven; and before them the road, by a succession of bold zigzags, was seen mounting to where a tower upon a tall cliff closed the view.

"There," said the Baronet, pointing to the tower, "you see the Felsenburg, your goal. I wish you a good journey, and regret I cannot be of more assistance."

He mounted to his place and gave a signal, and the carriage rolled away.

Seraphina stood by the wayside, gazing before her with blind eyes. Sir John she had dismissed already from her mind: she hated him, that was enough; for whatever Seraphina hated or contemned fell instantly to Lilliputian smallness and was thenceforward steadily ignored in thought. And now she had matter for concern indeed. Her interview with Otto, which she had never yet forgiven him, began to appear before her in a very different light. He had come to her, still thrilling under recent insult, and not yet breathed from fighting her own cause; and how that knowledge changed the value of his words! Yes, he must have loved her; this was a brave feeling—it was no mere weakness of the will. And she, was she incap-

able of love? It would appear so; and she swallowed her tears, and yearned to see Otto, to explain all, to ask pity upon her knees for her transgressions, and, if all else were now beyond the reach of reparation, to restore at least the liberty of which she had deprived him.

Swiftly she sped along the highway, and, as the road wound out and in about the bluffs and gullies of the mountain, saw and lost by glimpses the tall tower that stood before and above her, purpled by the mountain air.

CHAPTER II

TREATS OF A CHRISTIAN VIRTUE

WHEN Otto mounted to his rolling prison, he found another occupant in a corner of the front seat; but as this person hung his head and the brightness of the carriage lamps shone outward, the Prince could only see it was a man. The Colonel followed his prisoner and clapped-to the door; and at that the four horses broke immediately into a swinging trot.

"Gentlemen," said the Colonel, after some little while had passed, "if we are to travel in silence, we might as well be at home. I appear, of course, in an invidious character; but I am a man of taste, fond of books and solidly informing talk, and unfortunately condemned for life to the guard-room. Gentlemen, this is my chance: don't spoil it for me. I have here the pick of the whole court, barring lovely woman; I have a great author in the person of the Doctor ——"

"Gotthold!" cried Otto.

"It appears," said the Doctor, bitterly, "that

we must go together. Your Highness had not calculated upon that."

"What do you infer?" cried Otto; "that I had you arrested?"

"The inference is simple," said the Doctor.

"Colonel Gordon," said the Prince, "oblige me so far, and set me right with Herr von Hohenstockwitz."

"Gentlemen," said the Colonel, "you are both arrested on the same warrant in the name of the Princess Seraphina, acting regent, countersigned by Prime Minister Freiherr von Gondremark, and dated the day before yesterday, the twelfth. I reveal to you the secrets of the prison-house," he added.

"Otto," said Gotthold, "I ask you to pardon my suspicions."

"Gotthold," said the Prince, "I am not certain I can grant you that."

"Your Highness is, I am sure, far too magnanimous to hesitate," said the Colonel. "But allow me: we speak at home in my religion of the means of grace; and I now propose to offer them." So saying, the Colonel lighted a bright lamp which he attached to one side of the carriage, and from below the front seat produced a goodly basket adorned with the long necks of bottles. "*Tu spem reducis*—how does it go, Doctor?" he asked gaily. "I am, in a sense, your host; and I am sure you are both far too considerate of my embarrassing

position to refuse to do me honour. Gentlemen, I drink to the Prince!"

"Colonel," said Otto, "we have a jovial entertainer. I drink to Colonel Gordon."

Thereupon all three took their wine very pleasantly; and even as they did so, the carriage with a lurch turned into the high road and began to make better speed.

All was bright within; the wine had coloured Gotthold's cheek, dim forms of forest trees, dwindling and spiring, scarves of the starry sky, now wide and now narrow, raced past the windows; through one that was left open the air of the woods came in with a nocturnal raciness; and the roll of wheels and the tune of the trotting horses sounded merrily on the ear. Toast followed toast; glass after glass was bowed across and emptied by the trio; and presently there began to fall upon them a luxurious spell, under the influence of which little but the sound of quiet and confidential laughter interrupted the long intervals of meditative silence.

"Otto," said Gotthold, after one of these seasons of quiet, "I do not ask you to forgive me. Were the parts reversed, I could not forgive you."

"Well," said Otto, "it is a phrase we use. I do forgive you, but your words and your suspicions rankle; and not yours alone. It is idle, Colonel Gordon, in view of the order you are carrying out, to conceal from you the dissen-

sions of my family; they have gone so far that they are now public property. Well, gentlemen, can I forgive my wife? I can, of course, and do; but in what sense? I would certainly not stoop to any revenge; as certainly I could not think of her but as one changed beyond my recognition."

"Allow me," returned the Colonel. "You will permit me to hope that I am addressing Christians? We are all conscious, I trust, that we are miserable sinners."

"I disown the consciousness," said Gotthold. "Warmed with this good fluid, I deny your thesis."

"How, sir? You never did anything wrong? and I heard you asking pardon but this moment, not of your God, sir, but of a common fellow-worm!" the Colonel cried.

"I own you have me; you are expert in argument, Herr Oberst," said the Doctor.

"Begad, sir, I am proud to hear you say so," said the Colonel. "I was well grounded indeed at Aberdeen. And as for this matter of forgiveness, it comes, sir, of loose views and (what is if anything more dangerous) a regular life. A sound creed and a bad morality, that's the root of wisdom. You two gentlemen are too good to be forgiving."

"The paradox is somewhat forced," said Gotthold.

"Pardon me, Colonel," said the Prince; "I

readily acquit you of any design of offence, but your words bite like satire. Is this a time, do you think, when I can wish to hear myself called good, now that I am paying the penalty (and am willing like yourself to think it just) of my prolonged misconduct?"

"O, pardon me!" cried the Colonel. "You have never been expelled from the divinity hall; you have never been broke. I was: broke for a neglect of military duty. To tell you the open truth, your Highness, I was the worse of drink; it's a thing I never do now," he added, taking out his glass. "But a man, you see, who has really tasted the defects of his own character, as I have, and has come to regard himself as a kind of blind teetotum knocking about life, begins to learn a very different view about forgiveness. I will talk of not forgiving others, sir, when I have made out to forgive myself, and not before; and the date is like to be a long one. My father, the Reverend Alexander Gordon, was a good man, and damned hard upon others. I am what they call a bad one, and that is just the difference. The man who cannot forgive any mortal thing is a green hand in life."

"And yet I have heard of you, Colonel, as a duellist," said Gotthold.

"A different thing, sir," replied the soldier. "Professional etiquette. And I trust without unchristian feeling."

Presently after the Colonel fell into a deep

sleep; and his companions looked upon each other, smiling.

"An odd fish," said Gotthold.

"And a strange guardian," said the Prince. "Yet what he said was true."

"Rightly looked upon," mused Gotthold, "it is ourselves that we cannot forgive, when we refuse forgiveness to our friend. Some strand of our own misdoing is involved in every quarrel."

"Are there not offences that disgrace the pardoner?" asked Otto. "Are there not bounds of self-respect?"

"Otto," said Gotthold, "does any man respect himself? To this poor waif of a soldier of fortune we may seem respectable gentlemen; but to ourselves, what are we unless a paste-board portico and a deliquium of deadly weaknesses within?"

"I? yes," said Otto; "but you, Gotthold—you, with your interminable industry, your keen mind, your books—serving mankind, scorning pleasures and temptations! You do not know how I envy you."

"Otto," said the Doctor, "in one word, and a bitter one to say: I am a secret tippler. Yes, I drink too much. The habit has robbed these very books, to which you praise my devotion, of the merits that they should have had. It has spoiled my temper. When I spoke to you the other day, how much of my warmth was in

the cause of virtue? how much was the fever of last night's wine? Ay, as my poor fellow-sot there said, and as I vaingloriously denied, we are all miserable sinners, put here for a moment, knowing the good, choosing the evil, standing naked and ashamed in the eye of God."

"Is it so?" said Otto. "Why, then, what are we? Are the very best ——"

"There is no best in man," said Gotthold. "I am not better, it is likely I am not worse, than you or that poor sleeper. I was a sham, and now you know me: that is all."

"And yet it has not changed my love," returned Otto, softly. "Our misdeeds do not change us. Gotthold, fill your glass. Let us drink to what is good in this bad business; let us drink to our old affection; and, when we have done so, forgive your too just grounds of offence, and drink with me to my wife, whom I have so misused, who has so misused me, and whom I have left, I fear, I greatly fear, in danger. What matters it how bad we are, if others can still love us, and we can still love others?"

"Ay!" replied the Doctor. "It is very well said. It is the true answer to the pessimist, and the standing miracle of mankind. So you still love me? and so you can forgive your wife? Why, then, we may bid conscience 'Down, dog,' like an ill-trained puppy yapping at shadows."

The pair fell into silence, the Doctor tapping on his empty glass.

The carriage swung forth out of the valleys on that open balcony of high road that runs along the front of Grünewald, looking down on Gerolstein. Far below, a white waterfall was shining to the stars from the falling skirts of forest, and beyond that, the night stood naked above the plain. On the other hand, the lamplight skimmed the face of the precipices, and the dwarf pine-trees twinkled with all their needles, and were gone again into the wake. The granite roadway thundered under wheels and hoofs; and at times, by reason of its continual winding, Otto could see the escort on the other side of a ravine, riding well together in the night. Presently the Felsenburg came plainly in view, some way above them, on a bold projection of the mountain, and planting its bulk against the starry sky.

"See, Gotthold," said the Prince, "our destination."

Gotthold awoke as from a trance.

"I was thinking," said he, "if there is danger, why did you not resist? I was told you came of your free will; but should you not be there to help her?"

The colour faded from the Prince's cheeks.

CHAPTER III

PROVIDENCE VON ROSEN: ACT THE LAST: IN WHICH SHE GALLOPS OFF

WHEN the busy Countess came forth from her interview with Seraphina, it is not too much to say that she was beginning to be terribly afraid. She paused in the corridor and reckoned up her doings with an eye to Gondremark. The fan was in requisition in an instant; but her disquiet was beyond the reach of fanning. "The girl has lost her head," she thought; and then dismally, "I have gone too far." She instantly decided on secession. Now the *Mons Sacer* of the Frau von Rosen was a certain rustic villa in the forest, called by herself, in a smart attack of poesy, Tannen Zauber, and by everybody else plain Kleinbrunn.

Thither, upon the thought, she furiously drove, passing Gondremark at the entrance to the Palace avenue, but feigning not to observe him; and as Kleinbrunn was seven good miles away and in the bottom of a narrow dell, she passed the night without any rumour of the outbreak reaching her; and the glow of the

conflagration was concealed by intervening hills. Frau von Rosen did not sleep well; she was seriously uneasy as to the results of her delightful evening, and saw herself condemned to quite a lengthy sojourn in her deserts and a long defensive correspondence, ere she could venture to return to Gondremark. On the other hand, she examined, by way of pastime, the deeds she had received from Otto; and even here saw cause for disappointment. In these troublous days she had no taste for landed property, and she was convinced, besides, that Otto had paid dearer than the farm was worth. Lastly, the order for the Prince's release fairly burned her meddling fingers.

All things considered, the next day beheld an elegant and beautiful lady, in a riding-habit and a flapping hat, draw bridle at the gate of the Felsenburg, not perhaps with any clear idea of her purpose, but with her usual experimental views on life. Governor Gordon, summoned to the gate, welcomed the omnipotent Countess with his most gallant bearing, though it was wonderful how old he looked in the morning.

"Ah, Governor," she said, "we have surprises for you, sir," and nodded at him meaningly.

"Eh, madam, leave me my prisoners," he said; "and if you will but join the band, begad, I'll be happy for life."

"You would spoil me, would you not?" she asked.

"I would try, I would try," returned the Governor, and he offered her his arm.

She took it, picked up her skirt, and drew him close to her. "I have come to see the Prince," she said. "Now, infidel! on business. A message from that stupid Gondremark, who keeps me running like a courier. Do I look like one Herr Gordon?" And she planted her eyes on him.

"You look like an angel, ma'am," returned the Governor, with a great air of finished gallantry.

The Countess laughed. "An angel on horseback!" she said. "Quick work."

"You came, you saw, you conquered," flourished Gordon, in high good humour with his own wit and grace. "We toasted you, madam, in the carriage, in an excellent good glass of wine; toasted you fathom deep; the finest woman with, begad, the finest eyes in Grünewald. I never saw the like of them but once, in my own country, when I was a young fool at College: Thomasina Haig, her name was. I give you my word of honour, she was as like you as two peas."

"And so you were merry in the carriage?" asked the Countess, gracefully dissembling a yawn.

"We were; we had a very pleasant conversation; but we took perhaps a glass more than that fine fellow of a Prince has been accustomed to," said the Governor; "and I observe this

morning that he seems a little off his mettle. We'll get him mellow again ere bedtime. This is his door."

"Well," she whispered, "let me get my breath. No, no; wait. Have the door ready to open." And the Countess, standing like one inspired, shook out her fine voice in "Lascia ch' io pianga;" and when she had reached the proper point, and lyrically uttered forth her sighings after liberty, the door, at a sign, was flung wide open, and she swam into the Prince's sight, bright-eyed, and with her colour somewhat freshened by the exercise of singing. It was a great dramatic entrance, and to the somewhat doleful prisoner within the sight was sunshine.

"Ah, madam," he cried, running to her—"you here!"

She looked meaningly at Gordon; and as soon as the door was closed she fell on Otto's neck. "To see you here!" she moaned and clung to him.

But the Prince stood somewhat stiffly in that enviable situation, and the Countess instantly recovered from her outburst.

"Poor child," she said, "poor child! Sit down beside me here, and tell me all about it. My heart really bleeds to see you. How does time go?"

"Madam," replied the Prince, sitting down beside her, his gallantry recovered, "the time will now go all too quickly till you leave. But

I must ask you for the news. I have most bitterly condemned myself for my inertia of last night. You wisely counselled me; it was my duty to resist. You wisely and nobly counselled me; I have since thought of it with wonder. You have a noble heart."

"Otto," she said, "spare me. Was it even right, I wonder? I have duties, too, you poor child; and when I see you they all melt—all my good resolutions fly away."

"And mine still come too late," he replied, sighing. "Oh, what would I not give to have resisted? What would I not give for freedom?"

"Well, what would you give?" she asked; and the red fan was spread; only her eyes, as if from over battlements, brightly surveyed him.

"I? What do you mean? Madam, you have some news for me," he cried.

"O, O!" said madam, dubiously.

He was at her feet. "Do not trifle with my hopes," he pleaded. "Tell me, dearest Madame von Rosen, tell me! You cannot be cruel: it is not in your nature. Give? I can give nothing; I have nothing; I can only plead in mercy."

"Do not," she said; "it is not fair. Otto, you know my weakness. Spare me. Be generous."

"O, madam," he said, "it is for you to be generous, to have pity." He took her hand and pressed it; he plied her with caresses and appeals. The Countess had a most enjoyable sham siege, and then relented. She sprang to her feet, she

tore her dress open, and, all warm from her bosom, threw the order on the floor.

"There!" she cried. "I forced it from her. Use it, and I am ruined!" And she turned away as if to veil the force of her emotions.

Otto sprang upon the paper, read it, and cried out aloud. "O, God bless her!" he said, "God bless her." And he kissed the writing.

Von Rosen was a singularly good-natured woman, but her part was now beyond her. "Ingrate!" she cried; "I wrung it from her, I betrayed my trust to get it, and 'tis she you thank!"

"Can you blame me?" said the Prince. "I love her."

"I see that," she said. "And I?"

"You, Madame von Rosen? You are my dearest, my kindest, and most generous of friends," he said, approaching her. "You would be a perfect friend, if you were not so lovely. You have a great sense of humour, you cannot be unconscious of your charm, and you amuse yourself at times by playing on my weakness; and at times I can take pleasure in the comedy. But not to-day: to-day you will be the true, the serious, the manly friend, and you will suffer me to forget that you are lovely and that I am weak. Come, dear Countess, let me to-day repose in you entirely."

He held out his hand, smiling, and she took it frankly.

"I vow you have bewitched me," she said; and then with a laugh, "I break my staff!" she added; "and I must pay you my best compliment. You made a difficult speech. You are as adroit, dear Prince, as I am—charming." And as she said the word with a great curtsey, she justified it.

"You hardly keep the bargain, madam, when you make yourself so beautiful," said the Prince, bowing.

"It was my last arrow," she returned. "I am disarmed. Blank cartridge, *O mon Prince!* And now I tell you, if you choose to leave this prison, you can, and I am ruined. Choose!"

"Madame von Rosen," replied Otto, "I choose, and I will go. My duty points me, duty still neglected by this Featherhead. But do not fear to be a loser. I propose instead that you should take me with you, a bear in chains, to Baron Gondremark. I am become perfectly unscrupulous: to save my wife I will do all, all he can ask or fancy. He shall be filled; were he huge as leviathan and greedy as the grave, I will content him. And you, the fairy of our pantomime, shall have the credit."

"Done!" she cried. "Admirable! Prince Charming no longer—Prince Sorcerer, Prince Solon! Let us go this moment. Stay," she cried, pausing. "I beg, dear Prince, to give you back these deeds. 'Twas you who liked

the farm—I have not seen it; and it was you who wished to benefit the peasants. And, besides," she added, with a comical change of tone, "I should prefer the ready money."

Both laughed. "Here I am, once more a farmer," said Otto, accepting the papers, "but overwhelmed in debt."

The Countess touched a bell, and the Governor appeared.

"Governor," she said, "I am going to elope with his Highness. The result of our talk has been a thorough understanding, and the *coup d'état* is over. Here is the order."

Colonel Gordon adjusted silver spectacles upon his nose. "Yes," he said, "the Princess: very right. But the warrant, madam, was countersigned."

"By Heinrich!" said von Rosen. "Well, and here am I to represent him."

"Well, your Highness," resumed the soldier of fortune, "I must congratulate you upon my loss. You have been cut out by beauty, and I am left lamenting. The Doctor still remains to me: *probus, doctus, lepidus, jucundus:* a man of books."

"Ay, there is nothing about poor Gotthold," said the Prince.

"The Governor's consolation? Would you leave him bare?" asked von Rosen.

"And, your Highness," resumed Gordon, "may I trust that in the course of this temporary

obscuration, you have found me discharge my part with suitable respect and, I may add, tact? I adopted purposely a cheerfulness of manner; mirth, it appeared to me, and a good glass of wine, were the fit alleviations."

"Colonel," said Otto, holding out his hand, "your society was of itself enough. I do not merely thank you for your pleasant spirits; I have to thank you, besides, for some philosophy, of which I stood in need. I trust I do not see you for the last time; and in the meanwhile, as a memento of our strange acquaintance, let me offer you these verses on which I was but now engaged. I am so little of a poet, and was so ill inspired by prison bars, that they have some claim to be at least a curiosity."

The Colonel's countenance lighted as he took the paper; the silver spectacles were hurriedly replaced. "Ha!" he said, "Alexandrines, the tragic metre. I shall cherish this, your Highness, like a relic; no more suitable offering, although I say it, could be made. '*Dieux de l'immense plaine et des vastes forêts.*' Very good," he said. "Very good indeed! '*Et du geôlier lui-même apprendre des leçons.*' Most handsome, begad!"

"Come, Governor," cried the Countess, "you can read his poetry when we are gone. Open your grudging portals."

"I ask your pardon," said the Colonel. "To a man of my character and tastes, these verses,

this handsome reference—most moving, I assure you. Can I offer you an escort?"

"No, no," replied the Countess. "We go incogniti, as we arrived. We ride together; the Prince will take my servant's horse. Hurry and privacy, Herr Oberst, this is all we seek." And she began impatiently to lead the way.

But Otto had still to bid farewell to Doctor Gotthold; and the Governor following, with his spectacles in one hand and the paper in the other, had still to communicate his treasured verses, piece by piece, as he succeeded in deciphering the manuscript, to all he came across; and still his enthusiasm mounted. "I declare," he cried at last, with the air of one who has at length divined a mystery, "they remind me of Robbie Burns!"

But there is an end to all things; and at length Otto was walking by the side of Madame von Rosen, along that mountain wall, her servant following with both the horses, and all about them sunlight, and breeze, and flying bird, and the vast regions of the air, and the capacious prospect: wildwood and climbing pinnacle, and the sound and voice of mountain torrents, at their hand: and far below them, green melting into sapphire on the plains.

They walked at first in silence; for Otto's mind was full of the delight of liberty and nature, and still, betweenwhiles, he was preparing his interview with Gondremark. But when

the first rough promontory of the rock was turned, and the Felsenburg concealed behind its bulk, the lady paused.

"Here," she said, "I will dismount poor Karl, and you and I must ply our spurs. I love a wild ride with a good companion."

As she spoke, a carriage came into sight round the corner next below them in the order of the road. It came heavily creaking, and a little ahead of it a traveller was soberly walking, note-book in hand.

"It is Sir John," cried Otto, and he hailed him.

The Baronet pocketed his note-book, stared through an eye-glass, and then waved his stick; and he on his side, and the Countess and the Prince on theirs, advanced with somewhat quicker steps. They met at the re-entrant angle, where a thin stream strayed across a boulder and was scattered in rain among the brush; and the Baronet saluted the Prince with much punctilio. To the Countess, on the other hand, he bowed with a kind of sneering wonder.

"Is it possible, madam, that you have not heard the news?" he asked.

"What news?" she cried.

"News of the first order," returned Sir John: "a revolution in the State, a Republic declared, the Palace burned to the ground, the Princess in flight, Gondremark wounded——"

"Heinrich wounded?" she screamed.

"Wounded and suffering acutely," said Sir John. "His groans——"

There fell from the lady's lips an oath so potent that, in smoother hours, it would have made her hearers jump. She ran to her horse, scrambled to the saddle, and, yet half seated, dashed down the road at full gallop. The groom, after a pause of wonder, followed her. The rush of her impetuous passage almost scared the carriage horses over the verge of the steep hill; and still she clattered further, and the crags echoed to her flight, and still the groom flogged vainly in pursuit of her. At the fourth corner, a woman trailing slowly up leaped back with a cry and escaped death by a hand's-breadth. But the Countess wasted neither glance nor thought upon the incident. Out and in, about the bluffs of the mountain wall, she fled, loose-reined, and still the groom toiled in her pursuit.

"A most impulsive lady!" said Sir John. "Who would have thought she cared for him?" And before the words were uttered, he was struggling in the Prince's grasp.

"My wife! the Princess? What of her?"

"She is down the road," he gasped. "I left her twenty minutes back."

And next moment, the choked author stood alone, and the Prince on foot was racing down the hill behind the Countess.

CHAPTER IV

BABES IN THE WOOD

WHILE the feet of the Prince continued to run swiftly, his heart, which had at first by far outstripped his running, soon began to linger and hang back. Not that he ceased to pity the misfortune or to yearn for the sight of Seraphina; but the memory of her obdurate coldness awoke within him, and woke in turn his own habitual diffidence of self. Had Sir John been given time to tell him all, had he even known that she was speeding to the Felsenburg, he would have gone to her with ardour. As it was, he began to see himself once more intruding, profiting, perhaps, by her misfortune, and now that she was fallen, proffering unloved caresses to the wife who had spurned him in prosperity. The sore spots upon his vanity began to burn; once more, his anger assumed the carriage of a hostile generosity; he would utterly forgive indeed; he would help, save, and comfort his unloving wife; but all with distant self-denial, imposing silence on his heart, respecting Seraphina's disaffection as he would

the innocence of a child. So, when at length he turned a corner and beheld the Princess, it was his first thought to reassure her of the purity of his respect, and he at once ceased running and stood still. She, upon her part, began to run to him with a little cry; then, seeing him pause, she paused also, smitten with remorse; and at length, with the most guilty timidity, walked nearly up to where he stood.

"Otto," she said, "I have ruined all!"

"Seraphina!" he cried with a sob, but did not move, partly withheld by his resolutions, partly struck stupid at the sight of her weariness and disorder. Had she stood silent, they had soon been locked in an embrace. But she too had prepared herself against the interview, and must spoil the golden hour with protestations.

"All!" she went on, "I have ruined all! But, Otto, in kindness you must hear me—not justify, but own, my faults. I have been taught so cruelly; I have had such time for thought, and see the world so changed. I have been blind, stone blind; I have let all true good go by me, and lived on shadows. But when this dream fell, and I had betrayed you, and thought I had killed——" She paused. "I thought I had killed Gondremark," she said with a deep flush, "and I found myself alone as you said."

The mention of the name of Gondremark pricked the Prince's generosity like a spur. "Well," he cried, "and whose fault was it but

mine? It was my duty to be beside you, loved or not. But I was a skulker in the grain, and found it easier to desert than to oppose you. I could never learn that better part of love, to fight love's battles. But yet the love was there. And now when this toy kingdom of ours has fallen, first of all by my demerits, and next by your inexperience, and we are here alone together, as poor as Job and merely a man and a woman—let me conjure you to forgive the weakness and to repose in the love. Do not mistake me!" he cried, seeing her about to speak, and imposing silence with uplifted hand. "My love is changed; it is purged of any conjugal pretension; it does not ask, does not hope, does not wish, for a return in kind. You may forget for ever that part in which you found me so distasteful, and accept without embarrassment the affection of a brother."

"You are too generous, Otto," she said. "I know that I have forfeited your love. I cannot take this sacrifice. You had far better leave me. O go away, and leave me to my fate!"

"O no!" said Otto; "we must first of all escape out of this hornets' nest, to which I led you. My honour is engaged. I said but now we were as poor as Job; and behold! not many miles from here I have a house of my own to which I will conduct you. Otto the Prince being down, we must try what luck remains to Otto the Hunter. Come, Seraphina; show

that you forgive me; and let us set about this business of escape in the best spirits possible. You used to say, my dear, that, except as a husband and a prince, I was a pleasant fellow. I am neither now, and you may like my company without remorse. Come, then; it were idle to be captured. Can you still walk? Forth, then," said he, and he began to lead the way.

A little below where they stood, a good-sized brook passed below the road, which overleapt it in a single arch. On one bank of that loquacious water a footpath descended a green dell. Here it was rocky and stony, and lay on the steep scarps of the ravine; here it was choked with brambles; and there, in fairy haughs, it lay for a few paces evenly on the green turf. Like a sponge, the hillside oozed with well-water. The burn kept growing both in force and volume; at every leap it fell with heavier plunges and span more widely in the pool. Great had been the labours of that stream, and great and agreeable the changes it had wrought. It had cut through dykes of stubborn rock, and now, like a blowing dolphin, spouted through the orifice; along all its humble coasts, it had undermined and rafted-down the goodlier timber of the forest; and on these rough clearings it now set and tended primrose gardens, and planted woods of willow, and made a favourite of the silver birch. Through all these friendly features the path, its human acolyte, conducted our two

wanderers downward,—Otto before, still pausing at the more difficult passages to lend assistance; the Princess following. From time to time, when he turned to help her, her face would lighten upon his—her eyes, half desperately, woo him. He saw, but dared not understand. "She does not love me," he told himself, with magnanimity. "This is remorse or gratitude; I were no gentleman, no, nor yet a man, if I presumed upon these pitiful concessions."

Some way down the glen, the stream, already grown to a good bulk of water, was rudely dammed across, and about a third of it abducted in a wooden trough. Gaily the pure water, air's first cousin, fleeted along the rude aqueduct, whose sides and floor it had made green with grasses. The path, bearing it close company, threaded a wilderness of briar and wild rose. And presently, a little in front, the brown top of a mill and the tall millwheel, spraying diamonds, arose in the narrows of the glen; at the same time the snoring music of the saws broke the silence.

The miller, hearing steps, came forth to his door, and both he and Otto started.

"Good-morning, miller," said the Prince. "You were right, it seems, and I was wrong. I give you the news, and bid you to Mittwalden. My throne has fallen—great was the fall of it! —and your good friends of the Phœnix bear the rule."

The red-faced miller looked supreme astonishment. "And your Highness?" he gasped.

"My Highness is running away," replied Otto, "straight for the frontier."

"Leaving Grünewald?" cried the man. "Your father's son? It's not to be permitted!"

"Do you arrest us, friend?" asked Otto, smiling.

"Arrest you? I?" exclaimed the man. "For what does your Highness take me? Why, sir, I make sure there is not a man in Grünewald would lay hands upon you."

"O, many, many," said the Prince; "but from you, who were bold with me in my greatness, I should even look for aid in my distress."

The miller became the colour of beetroot. "You may say so indeed," said he. "And meanwhile, will you and your lady step into my house?"

"We have not time for that," replied the Prince; "but if you would oblige us with a cup of wine without here, you will give a pleasure and a service, both in one."

The miller once more coloured to the nape. He hastened to bring forth wine in a pitcher and three bright crystal tumblers. "Your Highness must not suppose," he said, as he filled them, "that I am an habitual drinker. The time when I had the misfortune to encounter you, I was a trifle overtaken, I allow; but a

more sober man than I am in my ordinary, I do not know where you are to look for; and even this glass that I drink to you (and to the lady) is quite an unusual recreation."

The wine was drunk with due rustic courtesies; and then, refusing further hospitality, Otto and Seraphina once more proceeded to descend the glen, which now began to open and to be invaded by the taller trees.

"I owed that man a reparation," said the Prince; "for when we met I was in the wrong and put a sore affront upon him. I judge by myself, perhaps; but I begin to think that no one is the better for a humiliation."

"But some have to be taught so," she replied.

"Well, well," he said, with a painful embarrassment. "Well, well. But let us think of safety. My miller is all very good, but I do not pin my faith to him. To follow down this stream will bring us, but after innumerable windings, to my house. Here, up this glade, there lies a cross-cut—the world's end for solitude—the very deer scarce visit it. Are you too tired, or could you pass that way?"

"Choose the path, Otto. I will follow you," she said.

"No," he replied, with a singular imbecility of manner and appearance, "but I meant the path was rough. It lies, all the way, by glade and dingle, and the dingles are both deep and thorny."

"Lead on," she said. "Are you not Otto the Hunter?"

They had now burst across a veil of underwood, and were come into a lawn among the forest, very green and innocent, and solemnly surrounded by trees. Otto paused on the margin, looking about him with delight; then his glance returned to Seraphina, as she stood framed in that sylvan pleasantness and looking at her husband with undecipherable eyes. A weakness both of the body and mind fell on him like the beginnings of sleep; the cords of his activity were relaxed, his eyes clung to her. "Let us rest," he said; and he made her sit down, and himself sat down beside her on the slope of an inconsiderable mound.

She sat with her eyes downcast, her slim hand dabbling in grass, like a maid waiting for love's summons. The sound of the wind in the forest swelled and sank, and drew near them with a running rush, and died away and away in the distance into fainting whispers. Nearer hand, a bird out of the deep covert uttered broken and anxious notes. All this seemed but a halting prelude to speech. To Otto it seemed as if the whole frame of nature were waiting for his words; and yet his pride kept him silent. The longer he watched that slender and pale hand plucking at the grasses, the harder and rougher grew the fight between pride and its kindly adversary.

"Seraphina," he said at last, "it is right you should know one thing: I never . . ." He was about to say "doubted you," but was that true? And, if true, was it generous to speak of it? Silence succeeded.

"I pray you, tell it me," she said; "tell it me, in pity."

"I mean only this," he resumed, "that I understand all, and do not blame you. I understand how the brave woman must look down on the weak man. I think you were wrong in some things; but I have tried to understand it, and I do. I do not need to forget or to forgive, Seraphina, for I have understood."

"I know what I have done," she said. "I am not so weak that I can be deceived with kind speeches. I know what I have been—I see myself. I am not worth your anger, how much less to be forgiven! In all this downfall and misery, I see only me and you: you, as you have been always; me, as I was—me, above all! O yes, I see myself: and what can I think?"

"Ah, then, let us reverse the parts!" said Otto. "It is ourselves we cannot forgive, when we deny forgiveness to another—so a friend told me last night. On these terms, Seraphina, you see how generously I have forgiven myself. But am not *I* to be forgiven? Come, then, forgive yourself—and me."

She did not answer in words, but reached out her hand to him quickly. He took it; and as

the smooth fingers settled and nestled in his, love ran to and fro between them in tender and transforming currents.

"Seraphina," he cried, "O, forget the past! Let me serve and help you; let me be your servant; it is enough for me to serve you and to be near you; let me be near you, dear—do not send me away." He hurried his pleading like the speech of a frightened child. "It is not love," he went on; "I do not ask for love; my love is enough . . ."

"Otto!" she said, as if in pain.

He looked up into her face. It was wrung with the very ecstasy of tenderness and anguish; on her features, and most of all in her changed eyes, there shone the very light of love.

"Seraphina?" he cried aloud, and with a sudden, tuneless voice, "Seraphina?"

"Look round you at this glade," she cried, "and where the leaves are coming on young trees, and the flowers begin to blossom. This is where we meet, meet for the first time; it is so much better to forget and to be born again. O, what a pit there is for sins—God's mercy, man's oblivion!"

"Seraphina," he said, "let it be so, indeed; let all that was be merely the abuse of dreaming; let me begin again, a stranger. I have dreamed, in a long dream, that I adored a girl unkind and beautiful; in all things my superior, but still cold like ice. And again I dreamed, and thought

she changed and melted, glowed and turned to me. And I—who had no merit but a love, slavish and unerect—lay close, and durst not move for fear of waking."

"Lie close," she said, with a deep thrill of speech.

So they spake in the spring woods; and meanwhile, in Mittwalden Rath-haus the Republic was declared.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL POSTCRIPT

TO COMPLETE THE STORY

THE reader well informed in modern history will not require details as to the fate of the Republic. The best account is to be found in the memoirs of Herr Greisengesang (7 Bände: Leipzig,) by our passing acquaintance the licentiate Roederer. Herr Roederer, with too much of an author's licence, makes a great figure of his hero—poses him, indeed, to be the centre-piece and cloud-compeller of the whole. But, with due allowance for this bias, the book is able and complete.

The reader is of course acquainted with the vigorous and bracing pages of Sir John (2 volumes: London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown). Sir John, who plays but a tooth-comb in the orchestra of this historical romance, blows in his own book the big bassoon. His character is there drawn at large; and the sympathy of Landor has countersigned the admiration of the public. One point, however, calls for explanation; the chapter on Grünewald

was torn by the hand of the author in the Palace gardens; how comes it, then, to figure at full length among my more modest pages, the Lion of the caravan? That eminent literatus was a man of method; "Juvenal by double entry," he was once profanely called; and when he tore the sheets in question, it was rather, as he has since explained, in the search for some dramatic evidence of his sincerity, than with the thought of practical deletion. At that time, indeed, he was possessed of two blotted scrolls and a fair copy in double. But the chapter, as the reader knows, was honestly omitted from the famous *Memoirs on the various Courts of Europe.* It has been mine to give it to the public.

Bibliography still helps us with a further glimpse of our characters. I have here before me a small volume (printed for private circulation: no printer's name; n. d.) *Poésies par Frédéric et Amélie.* Mine is a presentation copy, obtained for me by Mr. Bain in the Haymarket; and the name of the first owner is written on the fly-leaf in the hand of Prince Otto himself. The modest epigraph—"*Le rime n'est pas riche*"—may be attributed, with a good show of likelihood, to the same collaborator. It is strikingly appropriate, and I have found the volume very dreary. Those pieces in which I seem to trace the hand of the Princess are particularly dull and conscientious. But the booklet had a fair success with that public for

which it was designed; and I have come across some evidences of a second venture of the same sort, now unprocurable. Here, at least, we may take leave of Otto and Seraphina—what do I say? of Frédéric and Amélie—ageing together peaceably at the court of the wife's father, jingling French rhymes and correcting joint proofs.

Still following the book-lists, I perceive that Mr. Swinburne has dedicated a rousing lyric and some vigorous sonnets to the memory of Gondremark; that name appears twice at least in Victor Hugo's trumpet blasts of patriot enumeration; and I came latterly, when I supposed my task already ended, on a trace of the fallen politician and his Countess. It is in the *Diary of J. Hogg Cotterill, Esq.* (that very interesting work). Mr. Cotterill, being at Naples, is introduced (May 27th) to "a Baron and Baroness Gondremark—he a man who once made a noise—she still beautiful—both witty. She complimented me much upon my French—should never have known me to be English—had known my uncle, Sir John, in Germany—recognised in me, as a family trait, some of his *grand air* and studious courtesy—asked me to call." And again (May 30th) "visited the Baronne de Gondremark—much gratified—a most *refined, intelligent* woman, quite of the old school, now *hélas!* extinct—had read my *Remarks on Sicily*—it reminds her of my uncle,

but with more of grace—I feared she thought there was less energy—assured no—a softer style of presentation, more of the *literary grace*, but the same firm grasp of circumstance and force of thought—in short, just Buttonhole's opinion. Much encouraged. I have a real esteem for this patrician lady." The acquaintance lasted some time; and when Mr. Cotterill left in the suite of Lord Protocol, and, as he is careful to inform us, in Admiral Yardarm's flag-ship, one of his chief causes of regret is to leave "that most *spirituelle* and sympathetic lady, who already regards me as a younger brother."

The Works of
R.L. Stevenson

VOL. 5

Treasure Island

Prince Otto

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